

**EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL AS A FORM
OF CHRISTIAN MISSION, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION
TO ITS MISSION IN ETHIOPIA**

**A Professional Project
Presented to the
Faculty of the School of Theology at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
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ABSTRACT

From August, 1974 through May, 1975 I had the opportunity to take a full time internship at the headquarters of Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. RVOG is a form of Christian mission by radio with local area production studios located in several countries throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and headquarters and transmitting station located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Out of my involvement with RVOG for those ten months arose the topic of study for this D.Min. Professional Project, entitled **EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL AS A FORM OF CHRISTIAN MISSION, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ITS MISSION IN ETHIOPIA.**

Statement of the Problem

The use of radio as a communication medium in the mission of the Christian Church represents an attempt to hook up its message with advanced technology. Obviously, this is a step which has brought many and varied results, depending on the particular theology of mission and its adaptability to radio, and on the extent to which the nature of radio, with all its possibilities and limitations, has been understood. Radio Voice of the Gospel represents one important attempt at mission by radio over the past two and a half decades.

Research Methodology

I have stated that it was out of my own personal experience and study during my internship that this professional project arose. Therefore, to begin with, while I was in Ethiopia I undertook a field study by collecting as much relevant material as I could at RVOG station headquarters and the Yemissrach Dintu area studio, both located in

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This material was gathered from a variety of sources: a. A few published articles on RVOG; b. unpublished papers, reports, speeches, etc. concerning RVOG and Yemissrach Dimts, most on file at these locations. These represent the greatest bulk of material collected in Ethiopia; c. Personal interviews with key people at RVOG station headquarters, at the Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center (of which the radio studio is a part), at the radio studio itself, and at the headquarters for the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Addis Ababa (which sponsors the Yemissrach Dimts area studio); d. Personal observation during my internship, and personal notes collected.

After the field study was completed and I had returned to California, I conducted library research here in the areas of: the nature of radio as a communication medium, Christian communication, and mission theology.

The final paper moves from background perspective to a discussion of theological assumptions to a study of the nature of radio to a study of the possibilities and limitations for the communication of the Gospel by radio to a study of RVOG's effectiveness in light of all this.

Major Findings

This study has established that the principles and policy held by Radio Voice of the Gospel in themselves appear to reflect an understanding of the possibilities and limitations for the use of radio in Christian mission. By in large I have found that RVOG is quite effective in implementing these. Effectiveness could be improved through strengthened ties in the area of church-studio relations, and through

much further implementation of the local churches' task of following up the radio broadcasts and leading the hearers into the local church family.

INTRODUCTION

From August, 1974 through May, 1975 I had the opportunity to take a full-time internship at the headquarters of Radio Voice of the Gospel (RVOG), in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. RVOG is a form of Christian mission by radio with local area production studios located in several countries throughout Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and headquarters and transmitting station located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Out of my involvement with RVOG for those ten months arose the topic of study for this D.Min. Professional Project.

Statement of the Problem

The use of radio as a communication medium in the mission of the Christian Church represents an attempt to hook up its message with advanced technology. Obviously, this is a step which has brought many and varied results, depending on the particular theology of mission and its adaptability to radio, and on the extent to which the nature of radio, with all its possibilities and limitations, has been understood. Radio Voice of the Gospel represents one important attempt at mission by radio over the past two decades.

Purpose of this project

The purposes of this project are: 1. To take a field study of Radio Voice of the Gospel, discuss the background historical perspective to its operation, the theological stance, and an outline of its operation and policy; 2. Then to discuss the nature of radio as a communication medium, and having done so 3. To determine possibilities

and limitations for Christian mission by radio with RVOG's theological stance as a guideline. All of these will finally lead to the ultimate purpose of the study: 4. To determine to what extent RVOG is really effective in understanding those possibilities and limitations of radio in its operation.

I should point out that since RVOG is an international organization with many area studios, it is impossible, within the scope of this project, to describe in detail its total operation in a study of effectiveness. Therefore, following a discussion of station level operation, one representative area studio -- Yemissrach Dimts (Ethiopia) --will be chosen for study.

Definition of Terms

Radio Voice of the Gospel -- is taken to mean the operation as a whole, seen from an historical, structural, theological, and policy viewpoint, without getting into detail in all areas of its operation through its area studios except from the general point of how they relate to RVOG in terms of the above-mentioned aspects.

Christian mission -- RVOG is owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation in cooperation with the World Association for Christian Communications. As such it has developed some basic theological guidelines and policy for its entire operation. But tied to it are several area studios all over Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and each of these studios serves a local church and consequently has its own theological profile within the basic theological guidelines provided by headquarters.

With Special Attention to Its Mission in Ethiopia -- Because of the large scale of its total operation, after pointing to RVOG's general guidelines, I have chosen for description one representative area studio, namely Yemissrach Dimts, which serves the Church of Ethiopia as a RVOG related studio.

Effectiveness -- to what extent RVOG is really effective in understanding the possibilities and limitations of radio for its mission, and implementing an understanding of these in practical operation.

Methodology for this Project

I have stated that it was out of my own personal experience and study during my internship that this professional project arose. Therefore, to begin with, while I was in Ethiopia I undertook a field study by collecting as much relevant material as I could at RVOG station headquarters and the Yemissrach Dimts area studio, both located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This material was collected from a variety of sources:

1. As much actual published material as possible I have tried to obtain. This has included articles from the Lutheran World magazine, and published documents of Sigurd Aske, first station director.

2. The greatest bulk of the material has been in unpublished form: Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service minutes, reports of Sigurd Aske, papers presented by the station director and by Department of Audience Research and Planning staff at Church consultations, seminars, Lutheran World Federation sponsored meetings, and others.

I have also collected papers presented by Yemissrach Dimts Ethiopia area studio people, and people from their sponsoring church -- the Evangelical

cal Church Mekane Yesus; reports from studio director's conferences, audience relations reports, Department of Audience Research and Planning reports, Yemissrach Dimts reports (particularly Public and Audience Relations Reports), and reports from the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus.

3. Personal interview with key people at RVOG station headquarters, at the Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center (of which the radio studio is a part), at the radio studio itself, and at the headquarters for the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Addis Ababa.

4. Personal observation through working in both the Department of Audience Research and Planning at RVOG headquarters, and the Programming Department, and attending staff meetings in both departments.

5. Personal collection of notes from seminars, and from RVOG forums, etc.

After the field study was completed and I had returned to California, I conducted library research here in the area of the nature of radio as a communication medium and in the area of Christian communication. This was done so as to establish some principles for an evaluation of RVOG's effectiveness. Therefore, after an introductory outline to RVOG, including a discussion of their theological assumptions, Chapter two studies the nature of radio to provide some basis for a discussion of the possibilities and limitations for the use of radio by RVOG in Chapter three. Chapter three, using RVOG theological assumptions as a guideline, and using input from books on Christian communication, then attempts to establish possibilities and limitations for the communication of the Gospel by radio. Chapter four attempts to determine, in light of the criteria set forth, how effective RVOG is. Chapter five is

my own critique and recommendations.

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND PERSPECTIVE OF RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL

Radio Voice of the Gospel, with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is an inter-continental radio organization owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation and affiliated in broadcasting with the World Association for Christian Communication. Along with the Programming Department at RVOG headquarters, fourteen area studios all over Africa, Asia, and the Middle East together produce 27 hours of programming daily in 13 different languages broadcast over two powerful 100,000 watt shortwave transmitters located in the hills outside Addis Ababa. In the broadcast target areas approximately one billion people live in at least 30 countries.

With that only very preliminary, rough sketch, a picture no doubt begins to form. The potential of Radio Voice of the Gospel is staggering. But what is behind all these impressive statistics? Is there a heartbeat that gives life to the operation? If so, where did it originate, how does it see itself, and what kind of a potential does it envisage, and how does it in reality deal with that potential? These are some of the questions that must be raised.

ORIGINS

Formative Organizations

To begin with, let's go back to the beginning and briefly trace the development of RVOG from idea to reality.

RVOG is owned and operated by the Lutheran World Federation but

is affiliated in broadcasting with the World Association for Christian Communication. And as the steps to such an arrangement are re-traced back to the late 1950's, it becomes apparent that radio evangelism on an international scale was an idea germinating from at least two directions.

1. Lutheran World Federation Initiative: In the mid-fifties, as Dr. Fridtjov Birkeli, then director of the Department of World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation, was traveling in Africa he began to catch a vision of the potential impact of radio in that continent. Apparently in informally discussing the possibilities of the LWF's involvement in radio with LWF leaders in the months following, he encountered questions and doubts about his idea. LWF leaders could sense his vision but found no careful research and proposals to back it up. The research was left to his successors in the Department of World Mission, who were pushed to work carefully in that direction. But Birkeli laid the foundation in his proposal to the LWF Assembly in Minneapolis in 1957. Included in his remarks, the LWF Broadcasting Service Report (1957-1963) quotes the following:

If we care to take another bold step in order to meet the challenge of today in these two continents, this could certainly be done in a most effective way by inaugurating well-planned continent-wide radio missions. Some countries allow free use of the State-radio; in others time would have to be bought. Some countries in Asia and Africa would have to be reached through our own broadcasting stations. Extensive travels in Africa have shown that this continent is ripe for radio mission. This will require heavy financial investments. But all that we have experienced during the last five years points to such a development as one of the most effective ways by which the Lutheran World Federation can fulfill its duties towards the missions that have not so far been reached through personal contact, but who could be reached through the many wireless sets which are now pouring out words and music into

village and city from ocean to ocean.¹

At the annual meeting of the Commission on World Mission in 1957 at Staten Island, New York, the Department of World Mission was granted \$1,000 to make a survey and to prepare a report which would make some definite proposals. This report was submitted to the 1958 LWF Commission on World Mission meeting at Sigtuna, Sweden. What came out of the research was the challenge "to build a Christian radio station somewhere in Africa."² The proposal was unanimously approved and later in the year ratified by the LWF executive committee.

The next question was: "Where in Africa would the station be located?" (There was never any doubt that the station should be in Africa. At the time, of the 25 or 26 privately operated Protestant radio stations in the world, and an approximately equal number of Catholic stations, only one was located in Africa, in Liberia.³) Dr. Sigurd Aske, who was commissioned to choose a location, points to some factors influencing the decision: 1.) There was a political consideration. A non-colonial territory was necessary, and Ethiopia and Liberia were the only reasonable possibilities. With the other Protestant radio station located in Liberia, Ethiopia was the most logical choice. 2.) There was a geographical consideration. Most of the Lutheran churches

¹Sigurd Aske, "The Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service: Report 1957-1963" (Paper prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Helsinki, Finland, July 30 - August 11, 1963), p. 7. (Cited as Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963")

²Ibid., p. 8.

³Ibid.

were on the east coast of Africa and in Madagascar. Asia was also a target consideration. Ethiopia was the logical country for the station's headquarters.⁴

2. Near East Christian Council Initiative: The other direction from which the idea of radio evangelism was germinating was from the Near East Christian Council. In May, 1958 they submitted an application for a franchise for a radio station to the Ethiopian government. Although this came half a year earlier than the Lutheran World Federation application, the LWF was not aware of it when they submitted their application. When the two parties recognized the situation, and the logical probability that only one would be given a franchise, they decided to enter an agreement so that both of their interests could be served. Representatives from each party met in Geneva in June 1959 to draw up an agreement. Essentially, the main points of the agreement were:

1. Whoever would become the franchised party, Party A, would own and administer the radio station.
2. The non-franchised party, Party B, would have a guaranteed amount of broadcast time on the station approximately equal to the time reserved for the owner of the station.
3. Final authority for interpreting and carrying out policy in programming would be vested in the owner.
4. Both parties agreed on basic principles of direction and purpose.⁵

As it turned out, the franchise was given to the LWF in November 1959, and the above agreement immediately went into effect. It was then decided that it would be good to have relationships with other regional

⁴Sigurd Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1960's), pp. 2-3.

⁵Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963", p. 12.

councils and non-Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia represented by the All-African Conference of Churches and the East Asia Christian Conference. This was done at a consultation called by Bishop Newbigin, Director of the LWF Department of World Mission, in Paris, 1962. At that meeting it was decided that successor to the NECC be formed. This successor was called the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting and represented the NECC and the other groups with whom they entered into cooperation.⁶ (Later, in 1968, the World Association for Christian Broadcasting merged with the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting to form the World Association for Christian Communications, and the work of the CCCB basically became the responsibility of the WACC's Department of Church Related Communication.⁷)

Basically, the contract which the Lutheran World Federation holds with the Ethiopian government is valid thirty years and renewable for another twenty years on the same terms. Later, in a discussion of station policy, I will refer in more detail to the contract. But it can be said from the outset that the contract gives a great deal of freedom to the LWF.

With the franchise granted, the contract signed, and the agreement between the LWF and the NECC (later the CCCB, and in 1968 the WACC) put into effect, planning and construction of Radio Voice of the Gospel began. The headquarters was located on the outskirts of Addis Ababa,

⁶Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel, p. 3.

⁷Ferdinand Eugene Baglo, "Radio Voice of the Gospel: A Decade of Performance in the Light of Stated Goals and Policies" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1972), p. 9.

and a 300 acre transmitter site about thirty kilometers away was rented by the Ethiopia government to RVOG.⁸

The funds for construction came from National Lutheran Councils in the U.S. and Canada, mission boards in these countries, and the German National Committee of the LWF.⁹

Even before the franchise was granted, Dr. Aske was asked to work out a preliminary proposal for statement of policy. This, of course, was developed and refined as plans for RVOG's operation got underway. I am going to deal substantially with policy a bit later in this paper, but I think that even as very preliminary proposals were being worked out, a general, fundamental purpose for RVOG's existence was emerging. It is to this purpose that I would now like to turn my attention.

General Purpose: Service to the Churches

Service to the churches: that, I believe, is the fundamental, underlying purpose for RVOG's existence, and as such, it must be spelled out at this point. It is the reason for the direction RVOG's activities have taken, for the theological stance, for the original organizational structure, and for the more recent structural improvement.

Dr. Sigurd Aske was asked to work out a preliminary proposal for an RVOG statement of policy to bring before the Commission on World Mission in 1959. Of the four points, one, I believe, articulated a

⁸Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," p. 13.

⁹Sigurd Aske, "First Contours of the African Radio Station", Lutheran World, VI (June 1959), 56.

fundamental goal of service to the churches: "From the very start the aim will be to make both personnel and programs as indigenous as possible, in the hope of strengthening the life and activities of the local churches."¹⁰ A year later, Aske again referred to this conviction: "The station will be a servant of the churches. It will attempt to do what the churches want it to do. The program people must play by ear, they must sense the needs of the local churches and tailor the programs accordingly. For the station shall serve the Christian churches of Africa and Asia."¹¹ As general director of the LWF Broadcasting Service, in preparing a report on RVOG to the Broadcastisng Service in 1963, Dr. Aske expressed this same sentiment a little differently:

Radio Voice of the Gospel wants to serve the Christian churches in Africa and Asia. It must never become an independent missionary operation, a radio center from which a few individuals preach to the world. Radio Voice of the Gospel is a tool in the hands of the local churches, a modern method of communication, enabling the churches to reach their own people.¹²

I would like to take a closer examination of the meaning and significance of this goal of serving the Christian churches in Africa and Asia -- to see in what way it has given direction to RVOG's theological stance and organizational structure. Prior to that discussion, however, it may be useful to pause a bit and examine the meaning of the term "church" in the goal of "service to the church."

¹⁰Ibid., p. 57.

¹¹Sigurd Aske, "Radio Evangelism for the Uncommitted Continent," Lutheran World, VI (March 1960), 416.

¹²Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957 - 1963," p. 15. By 'own people' Aske does not mean only those who are a part of the church. Rather, this term probably means the people of one's nationality, culture, etc.

Reference has already been made to the sense in which RVOG relates to its sponsoring bodies which are agents of churches in the West. But, much more fundamentally, RVOG's goal is to serve the local churches of Africa and Asia.

To begin with, Dr. Aske said that "RVOG must never become an independent missionary operation." This already gives strong indication of a concerted effort to move away from a Western dominated and conceived church and a move towards encouraging the growth of independent national churches. Where does this fit in the more recent history of Christian missions?

The history of Christian missions, up into the twentieth century, definitely reflects Christendom's identification with the West. The expansion of Christianity has coincided with the world-wide expansion of Europe that followed the Renaissance. "Christianity has been carried forward on the wave of western prestige and power."¹³ Generally, up until quite recently, and even to some extent today, becoming a Christian has also meant abandoning the native way of life and adopting a western orientation. The growing independence of nation after nation is now a key factor leading to the gradual elimination of the above trend.

Added to this, in the whole move from mission to church, there is perhaps the greatest stumbling block, namely the notion of mission as a response to a special call of certain individuals and groups of individuals rather than as the responsibility of the churches as a whole.¹⁴

¹³Stephen Neil, A History of Christian Missions (London: Watson and Viney, 1964), p. 450.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 511.

Particularly in the 40's and 50's this preconception was challenged. Argument against it was favored by the assertion that there should be no dichotomy between church and mission.¹⁵ Among the results of this understanding has been the development of the idea of partnership (between Western mission bodies and local churches) and later that of independence (although independence has for the most part not meant a cutting of ties, some of which, i.e. financial, are restrictive). But, missionaries were very slow in recognizing the gifts of indigenous Christians and entrusting responsibilities to them. And beyond that, they were also slow in training and preparing native people to shoulder the tasks and responsibilities of the church. Insisting on the importance of this training, Stephen Neil remarked: "A church cannot become genuinely independent unless it has local leaders capable of replacing the missionary on every level of thought and activity."¹⁶ On the other hand, it must be said that even though independence was and is a goal, the local church must be careful always to see itself as part of the universal church and stand prepared to deal with the tensions between local and universal church.

In light of these developments, RVOG, through its primary goal of "service to the churches", is attempting to take the independent, native church development seriously through a process of insuring, in a variety of ways, that radio is ultimately a tool in the hands of the

¹⁵Manfred Lundgren, "From the Point of View of Mission Theology" (Paper presented at the Arusha, Tanzania Consultation, The Concept of the Church in the African Setting, September 1973), p. 41.

¹⁶Neil, p. 517.

local church.

UNDERLYING THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

It is undoubtedly clear by now that RVOG is an international operation with a variety of sponsoring bodies (presently represented by the LWF and the WACC) and around fourteen program centers, each with their own sponsoring churches. RVOG is an ecumenical project. This was so from the very early stages in the planning, when, as has been pointed out, it was felt that because of common concern for evangelism and undergirding of churches in the target areas expressed by both the LWF and the NECC (later WACC), Christian broadcasting would have most efficiency and impact if some form of cooperation was achieved. But although this co-operation was ecumenical by nature, it is significant to recognize that, because of the contract which gave the LWF ownership and administration of RVOG, there was a strong Lutheran thrust to the project. Dr. Aske, a key designer, indicated that "although none of us had thought that this would be a purely Lutheran thing in terms of its utilization, we have ... safeguarded the Lutheran administration of the project."¹⁷

With a rather broad ecumenical base, a narrowly defined theological stance was impossible. But on the other hand, could not an alternative be a lack of a clearly defined theology? Reflecting on six years of station operation, Dr. Aske remarks: 'Neither lack of money nor fear of political involvement makes the Christian Church hesitate before the cameras and the microphones, but rather, lack of a clearly defined theology of mission.'¹⁸

¹⁷Baglo, p. 7.

¹⁸Sigurd Aske, "The Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service:

Where actually was RVOG with regard to a theological stance as it went in to operation? RVOG's first principle of its "Five Point Policy and Purpose" is: "To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation."¹⁹ Outside of this I do not find a clearly defined, unified theological statement. Dr. Aske appears to have been sensitive to the need for a clearly defined theology of mission. But at the same time he was nervous about "academic faith": "Academic faith creates no urgency for mission. And a predominant anxiety to be tuned to the moods of the day seems curiously enough to be accompanied with almost an in-built ability to avoid personal engagement and commitment to the Biblical Christ."²⁰ This concern for "personal engagement and commitment to the Biblical Christ" appears in fact to have been stronger than the concern for a "clearly defined theology of mission." Therefore, during its foundational years RVOG's theological stance seems to have been predominantly the result of Dr. Aske's personal commitment and direction.

Therefore, as I see it, what developed was:

1. One central mandate: "To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation to the widest possible audience."
2. Supportive and supplementary theological concerns expressed

Report 1963-1969" (Paper prepared for the Fifth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Porto Allegre, Brazil, July 14-21, 1970), pp. 94, 95. (Cited as Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1963-1969")

¹⁹ See p.

²⁰ Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1963-1969."

indirectly in policy and directly in personal statements by RVOG leaders as the years went on.

I will proceed by elaborating, first of all, the central mandate. A discussion of further theological concerns obtained from the sources indicated in point "2" above, will follow. Before continuing, a reminder is important: The theological stance to be outlined is a theological guideline for the RVOG operation as a whole. This basic guideline each of the area studios is expected to stand by, but each can develop a more particular theological stance within it to reflect its sponsoring church(es).

Dr. Sigurd Aske's first proposal to the Commission on World Mission (CWM) of the LWF in 1959 included the following initial point:

The Lutheran World Federation radio station will first and foremost proclaim the Christian message to as large an audience as possible. Whether a message is Christian or not will have to be tested by the formal principle 'sola scriptura'. It must be a biblical message, endeavoring to make the person and work of Jesus Christ as central as we find it revealed in the scriptures.²¹

This later resulted in RVOG's central mandate: "To proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation to the widest possible audience." (see p. 12)

Ultimate Authority of the Scriptures.

The first theological assumption that can be drawn, therefore, is that the ultimate and final authority for the Gospel to be proclaimed is the Scripture. Aske's emphasis on the formal principle, sola scriptura, makes this clear. The present station director, Manfred Lundgren, has

²¹Aske, "First Contours of the African Radio Station," p. 57.

underscored Aske's conviction in a paper entitled "The Use of Mass Media in the Ministry of the Church." He argues for the crucial importance of identifying the message:

The media in themselves, as they are used today, constitute 'unidentified messages' which are bound to have an effect on the individual as well as the public. In this situation, the Christian message must be identified as the 'voice of the Lord' ... the Lord who has made us, who has saved us and who continues to be concerned about us. I do not believe in a kind of hidden message, but in an open, identified Biblical message.²²

The Gospel is the Only Means of Salvation.

The second theological assumption that can be drawn is that the Gospel is the only means of salvation for all people. The belief that this is so and the conviction that the urgency of communicating the Gospel is thus increased is especially clear in Aske's 1959 report:

The issues at stake on the vast religious battlefields of Africa are more clearly defined than on any other continent. History has here arrayed three spiritual giants for a showdown: Islam, Christianity and materialistic atheism are presently engaged in a life and death struggle for the soul and destiny of Africa.²³

Clearly, the goal is for the Christian Gospel to predominate simply because it is believed to be "the only means of salvation."

RVOG's central mandate, as we have examined it so far, appears to represent a rather conservative theology of mission. Gerald Anderson, in his preface to a collection of essays entitled The Theology of the

²²Manfred Lundgren, "Use of Mass Media in the Ministry of the Church" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, October 24, 1972), p. 4.

²³Aske, "First Contours of the African Radio Station", p. 56.

Christian Mission, tells how in the international discussions of mission theology in the 30's there developed at least two quite divergent positions:

1. One approach believed that "the relation between religions must take increasingly hereafter the form of a common search for truth" and that the missionary "will look forward not to the destruction of these religions, but to their continued co-existence with Christianity, each stimulating the other in growth toward the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth."²⁴

2. The above approach received considerable criticism from another group which is, perhaps, best represented by Kraemer, in his book The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World. Kraemer stressed the idea of a radical discontinuity between the realm of "Biblical realism" and the whole range of non-Christian religious experience. "Dr. Kraemer took the position that all non-Christian religions, philosophies, and world views are 'the various efforts of man to apprehend the totality of existence,' whereas the Christian revelation, which is absolutely *sui generis*, remains hidden except to the eye of faith."²⁵ Kraemer believed in general revelation but maintained that God could only really be known through special revelation in the way he has revealed himself through Jesus Christ.²⁶

Since the 30's there has, of course, been continuing discussion

²⁴Gerald Anderson (ed.) The Theology of the Christian Mission (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), pp. 8-9.

²⁵Ibid., p. 10.

²⁶Ibid., p. 8-10.

on the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions, on the nature of revelation, and many other issues. But I think that these two approaches, at least in their basic form, have continued. RVOG probably falls close to the second approach. But having said that, I should like to suggest that final judgment be reserved until further discussion of its theological stance. Because in RVOG's central mandate is also found the conviction that the Gospel is relevant for all people. We have seen that the mandate carries the conviction that the Gospel is the only means of salvation. But as we get further in to a discussion of the relevancy of the Gospel for all people we will discover the rather broad understanding RVOG carries for the terms "Gospel" and "salvation".

The Gospel is Relevant for All People.

We turn now, therefore, to the third theological assumption that can be drawn from the mandate, namely, the the Gospel is relevant for all people. It is relevant to each person in every locality throughout the world. Earlier we have seen Lundgren's emphasis on the identification of the message. In the same report, he goes on to argue for the importance of the identification with the message. As God identified Himself with the message by sending His Son to live among men, to die, and to rise again, so the message is now entrusted to each believer in the living community and must be incarnate in the Church and in the lives of the believers.²⁷

What is really meant by the assertion that the Gospel is rele-

²⁷Lundgren, "Use of Mass Media," p. 5.

vant for all people? There seem to be at least two aspects to this assertion:

1. The Gospel must be appropriately expressed in the language, the culture, the thought patterns of the people in each area of the world.

2. The Gospel must become incarnate in the Church and in the lives of the believers in each area of the world.

These two are inter-related, but the second must remain a separate point because of its emphasis on the Church. It is this emphasis, in the whole discussion of relevancy, which I believe RVOG is driving towards.

To begin with though, what is meant by the first aspect of the above assertion? Why, for instance, must there be African theology for African people? This is the issue E.K. Mosothoane addresses in an article entitled The Message of the New Testament Seen in African Perspective. He first challenges his own argument with a quotation from E.A. Ruch: "Christ's message is not addressed to one nationality, one culture, one race, because God's promise is not based on national, cultural or racial characteristics or achievements of man, but exclusively on his superabundant love for all men."²⁸ The question then becomes for Mosothoane, "Why African theology?" His response is that what we are concerned with is the understanding of the Gospel within a specific context and life situation. He cites the history of the early church to

²⁸E.K. Mosothoane, "The Message of the New Testament Seen in African Perspective," in Relevant Theology For Africa (Missiological Institute at Mapumulo, 1973), p. 55.

show that the message remained the same but the garb in which it was communicated varied.²⁹

Paul Pakendorf, one of the lecturers at the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference held in Antsirabe, Madagascar in 1960, maintained that Jesus becomes the contemporary of every generation, and then went on to explain this by saying that,

This does not imply fragmentation so that you get various different Christs. But it is only in forgiving a particular sin that he overcomes sinfulness. It is only in being the brother of a particular man that he becomes a brother of all men. It is only in saving particular men that he becomes the Savior of mankind.³⁰

A substantial portion of programming being sent out by RVOG's transmitters is beamed to Africans. I believe RVOG joins with Kiwovale, a prominent African theologian, in saying that in this case the African world view must be known. Kiwovale says that the task of theology is to understand God's encounter with existence and to interpret it in the various life styles. He goes on to say that becoming a Christian is moving from inauthentic to authentic existence. Therefore it is very important that the new existence be, in fact, authentic and not simply a Western religious existence.³¹ Kiwovale points to some unique features of the African existence that must be taken seriously in the proclamation of the Gospel. For example: 1. The African life setting is communal

²⁹ Ibid., p. 57.

³⁰ Paul G. Pakendorf, "A Faith For a Specific Time and Place," in Antsirabe, The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference, 1960 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 67.

³¹ J. Kiwovale, "African Theology" (Paper presented at the Arusha, Tanzania Consultation, The Concept of the Church in An African Setting, September, 1973), p. 5ff.

(so that whereas the Western Church has tended to emphasize individual salvation, the African Church sees salvation in the context of community).

2. The Western division between body and soul is artificial to the African. Therefore it is important to proclaim the Gospel as speaking to the whole man.³² These two examples show us the importance of the development of a unique African theology.

Finally, with regard to appropriately expressing the Gospel in language and culture one must be careful to make the distinction between indigenization and syncretization. Indigenization we have seen to be important, but if the Gospel is syncretized with another religion something of its fundamental nature and radically unique message will be sacrificed.

To move on now, what I believe RVOG is really driving towards in the whole issue of relevancy is that the Gospel must become incarnate in the Church and in the believers in each area of the world. The Gospel is thus made relevant in this unique way. When Lundgren talks about "identification with the message" he is talking about relevance in terms of the dynamic reality of the Gospel and its transforming power entering into the life of the believer and incarnate in the whole living body of believers identified in each particular area as the Church. It is this very personal incarnate reality that is to be shared in the process of proclamation.

David Bosch says that "In Christ God became flesh and dwelt among us...In proclaiming the Gospel to man Christ must, so to speak,

³²Ibid., pp. 8-9.

become incarnate once again among a specific people."³³ In proclaiming the Gospel each Christian has the task of making it relevant. H.J. Becken, speaking to the same issue, says that the task of making the Gospel relevant is best accomplished by a person who has experienced this relevance in his own life so that he can tell others what it means to be set free by Christ for a new life in this particular situation.³⁴ Becken goes on to say that "there is no 'naked truth,' no academic abstraction, but it is legitimate that I proclaim the Gospel as it has become incarnate in my personality."³⁵

It is this incarnation of the Gospel in the believer that Lundgren is talking about. But to go even further, Lundgren is talking about the incarnation of the Gospel in not just the individual believer but in the Church as the body of these believers. I have mentioned earlier the strong Lutheran support and administration of RVOG. Although RVOG is an ecumenical project, I think this Lutheran thrust is strong. With this in mind, turning to the doctrine of the Church in the theology of the Lutheran Confessions I have discovered what I think is behind Lundgren's convictions. There we see that,

The Church is not an ideal toward which Christians are striving toward without ever reaching it in time, but the Church is present on earth prior to the individual Christians...The community of believers exists prior to my faith. The Holy Spirit first leads

³³David J. Bosch, "God Through African Eyes," in Relevant Theology for Africa (Missiological Institute at LTC Mampumulo, 1973), p. 75.

³⁴H.J. Becken, "Towards a Relevant Theology For Africa," in Relevant Theology For Africa (Missiological Institute at LTC Mampumulo, 1973), p. 5.

³⁵Ibid..

us into his holy community, placing us upon the bosom of the Church, whereby he preaches to us and brings us Christ.³⁶

The Gospel incarnate in the Church exists prior to the faith of those to whom the radio message is proclaimed. RVOG, as we have seen, insists that communication begins in the local Church. And as the communication begins in the Church so it must be followed up by the Church to personally bring the hearers into contact with and communion with the people of God in each locality. Follow-up ministry will be described in detail later, but for now I should at least say that it involves the work of the Church in evangelism and Bible correspondence courses, for example, to personally bring to the Church those touched by the radio message.

There is, of course, the danger that the Church might fall back from its ever present task of making the Gospel relevant. The Church has been very often heavily criticized for being rigidly unchanging and imprisoned in the past. Lundgren maintains that the school of thought that dominated the preparations for the World Council of Churches Assembly at Uppsala in 1968 even suggested that God does not need the Church in His mission. He is active in the world and is basically communicating with the world through events in history.³⁷ Lundgren recognizes the importance of criticism of the Church but argues very strongly that to assume that the Church is not necessary in God's mission is a fallacy.

Rather:

³⁶ Edmund Schlink, Theology of the Lutheran Confessions (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), pp. 217, 200.

³⁷ Lundgren, "Use of Mass Media," p. 1.

It is the Church that is entrusted with the means of grace -- word and sacrament -- through which God is revealing His infinite love to the world, His saving power and His nurturing Grace.³⁸

The Gospel Speaks to the Whole Man

Another fundamental assumption that RVOG adheres to, although not stated in its central mandate, is: The Gospel speaks to the whole man. In Aske's preliminary proposal to the CWM in 1959, he already makes it clear that the programming going out of LWF radio stations will be more than hymn singing and scripture reading.³⁹ Later in a published pamphlet on RVOG he states that the whole spectrum of programs has its place: entertainment, information, education. He further adds that all the programs must be Christian, and that the criterion will be faithfulness to the revealed truth in Christ.⁴⁰ RVOG carries as a standing principle what is known as the "30-70 formula," one which calls for 30% of all programming to be directly evangelical and 70% to be educational and informational in character. From Aske's remarks and from RVOG's "30-70 formula" I think that already an indirectly stated theological assumption is made, namely, that the Gospel speaks to the whole man. This becomes more explicity in the ways described below.

At the insauguration of RVOG in 1963, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry (as then President of the LWF) made the following statement:

Proclamation of the gospel and engagement in the needs of men and the issues of their social life must not be polarized.

³⁸Ibid..

³⁹Aske, "First Contours of the African Radio Station," p. 57.

⁴⁰Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel, p. 7.

Engagement without witness to the gospel fails to free man from the conditions underlying his brokenness. Proclamation without engagement is a denial of our concern and solidarity....Since man as man is the object of God's love, his total life must be the concern of mission,⁴² his life in this world and his eternal destiny as one entity.

This statement is, I believe, quite representative of where RVOG is. Let it serve now as a good beginning point for a little broader discussion of the relation of salvation and humanization. To put it in perspective of this discussion we should first of all turn back to the theology of mission which dominated the World Council of Churches Assembly at Uppsala, Sweden in 1968. That Assembly emphasized the obligation laid upon the Church to identify herself with the world and to participate in its struggles for human rights, social justice, and world community. The Uppsala Report on "Renewal in Mission" says:

There is a burning relevance today in describing the mission of God, in which we participate, as the gift of a new creation which is a radical renewal of the old and the invitation to man to grow up into their full humanity in the New Man, Jesus Christ.⁴³

The theology of this Assembly created quite a stir of reaction. One significant form of conservative response came in a statement entitled The Frankfurt Declaration which was supported by a number of leading German theologians.⁴⁴ These theologians were very dismayed by what they felt to be a humanistic turns that the World Council of

⁴² Martin Kretzmann, "Crosscurrents in Mission, Report on a Consultation of the LWF Commission on World Mission," Lutheran World, XVI (1969), 355.

⁴³ M.M. Thomas, "Salvation and Humanization," International Review of Missions, LX (January 1971), 26.

⁴⁴ Donald McGavran, "The Frankfurt Declaration," Christianity Today, XIV (June 1970), 3-4.

Church missions had taken. With "seven indispensable basic elements of missions" they hoped to clarify the "true missionary motives and goals of the Church of Jesus Christ."⁴⁵ Their key thoughts therein seem to me to be as follows: They argued that the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20) must determine the nature of Christian mission, not "socio-political analyses of our time." They argued against humanization as a primary goal of mission, suggesting that it is rather a product of our new birth in Christ. Citing Acts 4:12 they rejected any possibility of salvation without direct news of the Gospel. In their final point, citing Matt. 24:14 they said:

We refute the identification of messianic salvation with progress, development, and social change....We do, however, affirm the determined advocacy of justice and peace by all churches, and we affirm that 'assistance in development' is a timely realization of the divine demand for mercy and justice as well as the command of Jesus: 'Love thy neighbor.'⁴⁶

Peter Beyerhaus, professor of the Department of Missiology at Tübingen who was the key figure behind the Frankfurt Declaration, suggested that "social compassion has swallowed up soteriological compassion."⁴⁷ He says that his opponents argue that in the humanizing process it is the risen Christ who is operating, as the anonymously directing power of world history. To this Beyerhaus responds by saying that "This whole concept no longer focuses on the crucifixion and the second coming of Christ. It overlooks the whole tension between

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Peter Beyerhaus, "Mission and Humanization," International Review of Missions, LVIII (October 1969), 17.

world history and salvation history."⁴⁸ He calls the view anthropocentric⁴⁹ and in one very dramatic, climactic statement says:

There is one basic and fatal error in a theology of mission which locates the missionary work of God one-dimensionally in world history: it overlooks or belittles the demonological crack which runs right through history from the Fall to the end of the world. Therefore it is unable to put the cross of Christ with all that it stands for in the centre.⁵⁰

M.M. Thomas (in 1971 at the time of the following statements director of the Christian Institute for the study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, India, and chairman of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches), in January 1971 responded to Beyerhaus' criticism of the WCC position. He says, first of all, that the question at issue is whether or not God and the proclamation of Christ have been muted in the Christology and the theology of mission which dominated Uppsala.⁵¹ He criticizes Beyerhaus' suggestion that theology has been replaced by anthropology and maintains that the ultimate frame of reference is Jesus Christ who is God-Man.⁵² He further criticizes Beyerhaus' discussion of world history and salvation history and suggests that Beyerhaus is confining mission to the preaching of the Gospel. "The rest of human history is given up as lost, or if Christ is acknowledged as working in it, the work is totally hidden and nothing can

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 23.

⁵¹ Thomas.

⁵² Ibid., p. 29.

be known about the pattern of His creating, judging, and saving work.⁵³ For Thomas humanization from the Christian perspective is not a distinct, secular phenomenon but is informed and guided by the crucified risen Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of Him:

Missionary participation in the humanization of the world should be characterized by constant knowledge and communication of the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ, either in dialogue, presence or proclamation. Its purpose is to make Christ known as the source and founder of true humanization.⁵⁴

It is hard to say if Thomas is also accurately representing the position of the WCC in their 1968 Assembly, but he does seem to be close. His first question was whether or not the proclamation of Christ had been muted in the theology of mission at Uppsala. Perhaps there was a danger of not always understanding world history from the guiding perspective of salvation history. Perhaps the importance of direct proclamation of the Gospel was somewhat muted. But that Jesus Christ was seen to be central is evidenced in the Uppsala Report Renewal in Mission by the desire that people "grow up into their full humanity in the New Man, Jesus Christ."⁵⁵

Guided by Thomas' perspective, what seems to be most important is not to talk about salvation and humanization, but to see them as interrelated. Rev. J. Kiwoele, a prominent African theologian, argues that the division between body and soul is artificial, that African social life is intimately linked together with the religious life, and

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 26.

it is thereby impossible to separate the body from the soul. They belong to the whole man, family, community and nation. He criticizes church and missions that have tried to save the spirit and have ended up killing the body, the spirit, and the whole man at the same time.⁵⁶ This understanding was, I think, particularly formative to the position taken by the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus in Ethiopia in a statement entitled the Inter-Relation of Proclamation and Development which was drafted in May, 1972.⁵⁷ In this statement the ECMY described the situation when, as a reaction to what was felt to be too heavy emphasis on evangelism in missions in the 50's, many mission agencies and other independent development agencies began to stress development work a great deal in the 60's. In the early 70's, many of the mission-created churches in Africa, who depended on funds from overseas, felt that too many funds were earmarked for development and the task of evangelization was suffering. The ECMY therefore drafted this document and directed it to supporting mission agencies with that criticism, using as a central argument their understanding of the body and soul as a unity and the assertion that only a partial ministry was again being accomplished. They argue for the fundamental necessity of leading a person to an identity in and through Jesus Christ and see this as the pre-requisite for a healthy and lasting material development.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Kiwovele, pp. 9-15.

⁵⁷IDOC Documentation Participation Project, The ECMY Statement on the Inter-Relation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development. Proclamation and Development: Ethiopia. Report no. 8, 1974.

⁵⁸Ibid.

RVOG has been significantly in tune with the basic thrust of this development, although there may be debate as to exactly how one inter-relates what we in the West see as the spiritual and the physical. At the sixth studio directors' conference held in February, 1973, the following statement was made:

The specific Christian contribution in development is to humanize the concept of development by showing man as created in God's image and re-created in and through the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. Thus development has to do with the whole man. Any other concept of development which does not include man as God's project, can only provide a partial solution to man's need for development.⁵⁹

Finally, let me point to the position held by the present station director, Manfred Lundgren. While in Ethiopia, I had the opportunity to interview him in November, 1974, with regard to the issue of the balance of programming indicated by the Gospel's speaking to the "whole man". He argued against the division of spiritual and physical needs, saying it was inconsistent with his theology of man and said: "I would rather see man as a creation of God, as one entity, which cannot be divided, and must be served as a whole being." To this he added the assertion that it is the identity given in and through Jesus Christ that gives meaning to all other activity.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Radio Voice of the Gospel Sixth Studio Director's Conference. Agenda and Minutes. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, February 26-March 3, 1973.

⁶⁰Manfred Lundgren, Personal Interview, Radio Voice of the Gospel, November 12, 1974.

STRUCTURAL AND OPERATIONAL OUTLINE

It has become clear that, holding to a purpose of service to the churches, RVOG intends fundamentally to decentralize its activities, to the extent that the local churches of Africa and Asia receive high priority in the organizational structure.

As a result, once the headquarters had found a location in Addis Ababa, and potential transmitter coverage was worked out (RVOG started with one 50,000 watt short-wave transmitter, and now has two 100,000 watt transmitters), a choice of target areas had to be made. Dr. Aske has outlined several factors which led to the choice of target areas and the languages of broadcast: "the number of people speaking a given language in a given area; the availability of other (Christian) radio services; the willingness and ability of a local church to sponsor a studio to produce the programs."⁶¹ To elaborate, these are some of the fundamental criteria considered:

1. technical coverage;
2. number of people using the language;
3. number of radio receivers in the area;
4. Christian Broadcasts beamed to the area;
5. number of Christians and non-Christians;
6. approaches of churches and missions to the language group--can the churches ready the people of this group, and will they? Where does radio stand in relation to other means of Christian penetration? Is it a situation where radio could break through barriers the church can't;
7. Reactions of other language groups;
8. production possibilities in the area--can the church handle a studio?;
9. export restrictions (regarding taped programs to be sent to Addis);
10. language coverage of the area.⁶²

⁶¹Sigurd Aske, "Preaching Christ to His World," Lutheran World, XIII: 1 (1966), 68.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 68-69.

Early Moves Toward Establishment of Area Studios.

With these criteria in mind, the sponsoring agencies of RVOG contacted various church bodies and councils towards the possibilities of sponsoring and setting up programming centers, and in at least one case, hooking up an already existing Christian Communications Service center to RVOG. In some cases studios were in operation well before the opening of RVOG. As more studios were opened, some were done so under the sponsorship of one denomination, others were joint ventures of several churches and/or Christian Councils.⁶³

By the time of the initial broadcast period, February 26, 1963 to April 30, 1963, target areas included Madagascar, East Arabia, Ethiopia, Tanganyika, West Arabia, South Africa. The studios in these areas, with the exception of Arabia, were all under Lutheran sponsorship, in some cases a specific denomination, on other cases a Lutheran Council. The Near East Christian Council sponsored the studios in Arabia. In the following years several more studios were erected throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, sponsored by various Lutheran churches, a Presbyterian Church, and Christian regional councils (See appendix A for a listing of RVOG area studios, and sponsoring agencies.)⁶⁴

Looking, now at the overall structure, a first impression shows a linear relationship from the sponsoring agencies on top to the churches on the bottom ... perhaps something like this:

⁶³Paul Volz, "The Church - The Studio - The Message" (Paper presented at the Audience Relations Workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October, 1974), p. 2.

⁶⁴Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," pp. 15-16.

Sponsoring agencies: headquarters Geneva

RVOG Station Headquarters

Studio

Church

In one sense this is so. But in the total structure's emphasis on the local church, it has given a good deal of freedom to the level of relationship between church and studio. On the one hand, to be sure, RVOG headquarters provides basic guidelines. But on the other hand, each studio is free to develop its own profile in relationship to its church. Therefore we should be careful not to see a deterministic, centralist perspective in the structural outline.

Church-Studio Relationship.

In practice, how do these levels relate to each other? Beginning with the relationship between church and studio, each area studio has a local radio board, sponsored by the local church body, which determines the content of programs. In addition, an audience relations officer seeks to establish ties between church and studio. The studio attempts to serve the church by becoming a kind of channel for the church's message. In a sense, the professional radio people only design the message to fit the medium of radio communication. A goal is continuing dialogue between church and studio to insure effectiveness of programming and audience relations. The church must become aware of the nature and demands of communication by radio, and the radio studio must seek constantly to understand and interpret the dynamic message of the church. On the church's side, is their responsibility to take up audience relation

work in all its aspects -- making programs known, giving attention to listener mail, following up programs by other personal forms of outreach wherever possible, and directing the interested hearers into the congregations where they can personally receive the love of Christ.

Studio - Station Relationship.

Between studio and RVOG headquarters, a relationship exists in which the headquarters is intended to be a service center for the local studios, assisting, training and advising as to how better implement an effective first level.

RVOG headquarters provides certain guidelines for all area studio operation. These guidelines reflect both internal policy and limitations indicated by RVOG's franchise. They are as follows:

Three primary principles:

1. All programs (except news programs) are produced by the churches in the areas where they are heard.
2. No broadcasts are scheduled unless there is a minimum of half an hour daily, to the same area, in the same language, at the same time and frequency.
3. Programming is balanced according to the so-called "30-70 principle" [This principle calls for 30% of all programming to be directly evangelical, and 70% educational and developmental.]⁶⁵

Five Point Policy and Purpose:

1. To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation.
2. To strengthen the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programs that nurture believers in their Christian faith, and to keep the challenge and responsibility of evangelism constantly before the churches.
3. To promote education and culture through the broadcast of

⁶⁵Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel, pp. 5-6.

educational and cultural programs.

4. To assist the churches in follow-up work.
5. To train radio workers.⁶⁶

Administration

The staff shall, under leadership of the Director, and subject to the authority of the Board of Directors:

1. produce programs,
2. accept, reject or edit any program submitted for broadcast,
3. guide and advise local production of programs,
4. arrange and determine a balanced broadcast schedule,
5. represent the station with broadcasters, listeners and government.⁶⁷

Limitations

1. No program shall involve the station in partisan politics,
2. No program shall in substance or intent attack or deny the evangelical Christian faith, or contradict generally accepted codes of Christian morality,
3. No program for commercial advertising purposes shall be accepted.⁶⁸

In addition to the administration, there are three key departments: 1. Program Department; 2. Department of Audience Research and Planning; and 3. Technical Department.

The Program Department is, to some extent, like an area studio. Its primary function is to produce programs for broadcast in English and French to Ethiopia, East Africa and West Africa on behalf of churches who are unable to sponsor area studios. A news service also prepares the news in several languages to be broadcast all over that part of the world.

The Department of Audience Research and Planning probably reflects

⁶⁶Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," p. 27.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

most clearly the image of RVOG as a service center. It provides services in the area of audience research, training, program resources development, and audience relations assistance. In addition, a broadcast editor makes periodic checks on the incoming programs to see that basic RVOG guidelines, as indicated above, are adhered to.

The Technical Department essentially is responsible for all the steps required from the time the taped programs are received in the mail from the area studios to the time when these programs are beamed back to the appropriate country as effectively, and as clearly as possible. In addition, a team of technicians assist in the production of station-produced programs.

Station-Sponsoring Agencies Relationship.

Finally, concerning the relationship between RVOG headquarters and the sponsoring agencies, Manfred Lundgren, the present station director, has indicated that RVOG is essentially operating on their behalf.⁶⁹ The sponsoring agencies determine, along with representation from RVOG headquarters, the basic direction the station takes. Large issues of policy, of organizational change, or re-ordering of priorities are examples of matters decided at this level.

⁶⁹Lundgren, Personal Interview.

Chapter 2

THE NATURE OF RADIO AS A COMMUNICATION MEDIUM

With an outline perspective of Radio Voice of the Gospel as a form of Christian mission to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, it is now appropriate to enter into a discussion of the nature of radio as a communication medium. This will lead to a discussion of the possibilities and limitations for RVOG's use of radio indicated by their theological mission stand, followed by a study of RVOG effectiveness in terms of the extent to which these possibilities and limitations are reflected and understood in their operation.

The present chapter, on the nature of radio, will begin with a description of radio -- its characteristics as a mass medium. An enumeration of some communication models, followed by a summary of some research contributions will complete this chapter and prepare for a discussion of radio in relation to RVOG in Chapters 3 and ⁴, as indicated above.

1. The Nature of Radio.

Radio is a form of communication with a process similar to communication in general, but with different elements. In all forms of communication there is, at least, a source, a message, and a destination.¹ Radio communication employs an electronic, artificial channel to carry

¹Richard Hixon, "Mass Media: an approach to human communication", in Richard Budd and Brent D. Ruben (eds.) Approaches to Human Communication (New York: Spartan Books, 1972), p. 223.

the message.

A source, which is an organization of writers, producers and technicians, prepares a message which is broadcast by sound waves through the air where it is picked up by a radio receiver and transmitted in sound to the listener. The message travels by sound waves only, and therefore only requires the sense of hearing on the receiving end. Also, because the message travels by sound waves through the air, receivers can be anywhere.

Radio, as a medium, is public, rapid, and transient:

public - it is addressed to an anonymous audience which generally remains personally unknown to the sender. Reasons for this are that the audience is large and heterogeneous. Being large, the sender cannot interact with the audience on a face to face basis. Being heterogeneous, the audience represents a variety of ages, sex, level of education, and geographical locations.

rapid - it is meant to reach large audiences within a short time.

transient - it is intended to be consumed immediately.²

There is normally a high degree of output in relation to input, particularly when compared with person-to-person communication. There is very little direct feedback, and what does come back is most commonly inferential expression (turning off or on the set, and switching frequencies).³

²Charles Wright, Mass Communication; a sociological perspective (New York: Random House, 1959), pp. 13-15.

³Wilbur Schramm (ed.) The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), pp. 18, 19.

Having pointed to these general characteristics, there are, what I consider to be, two paradoxes.

The first is what I would call the "personal/impersonal paradox". Although the audience is a mass, and much has been said with regard to the impersonal nature of the artificial medium of radio, there is considerable agreement that even though mass communication is not "individual" communication, it can be very personal. "Radio conveys the emotional overtones of sound, including the human voice, and offers an immediacy which connects the event directly with the perceiver."⁴ With this in mind, Malcolm Boyd suggests that the radio communicator can be quite personal by empathizing with the listener.⁵ McLuhan carries this personal nature of radio even further, maintaining that radio comes to us with person to person directness, and that as such, it is a private experience affecting most people intimately.⁶ But although this may be true, I do not think even McLuhan would agree that radio can ever have the kind of impact that is the result of personal communication representing a relationship of persons. Although mass media senders know they must speak to individuals, they do not know them as individuals, but as part of a group.

Closely related to the "personal/impersonal paradox" is what I see as an "individual/group paradox". Radio Communication speaks to

⁴John Bachman, The Church in the World of Radio - Television (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 20.

⁵Malcolm Boyd, Crisis in Communication (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 109.

⁶Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media; the extensions of Man (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 262-264.

both individual and the group. McLuhan has spoken of the 'person to person directness' of radio communication, but clearly points out that although radio speaks to individuals, it does not foster individualism. Whereas literacy may have fostered individualism, radio did just the opposite by reviving the ancient expression of kinship webs of deep tribal involvement.⁷ According to McLuhan there is a depth involvement with group in a subconscious way. Radio is a "subliminal echo chamber of magical power to touch remote and forgotten chords."⁸ Schramm points to activity of a group in radio communication in yet another way. He agrees that mass communication audiences in general have very little direct contact with each other. The audience is a mass, but composed of individual listeners. But he goes on to say that we must keep in mind that each individual is connected with a group, or groups -- family, close friends, people at work, etc. These people get together and often talk about the broadcast, re-interpret it and encode it in group opinion, and perhaps even in group action.⁹ Looking at the relationship of individual to group in yet another way, Aranguren finds that although group action may be evident in this way, as a kind of delayed result of the original radio communication, "group psychology", at the time of the radio communication is not evident as it is with mass communication to macro-groups. In the latter there is a great deal of "group psychology" because of the close proximity of all the listeners. Emotional fervor, and conformism

⁷Ibid., p. 263.

⁸Ibid., p. 264.

⁹Schramm, p. 20.

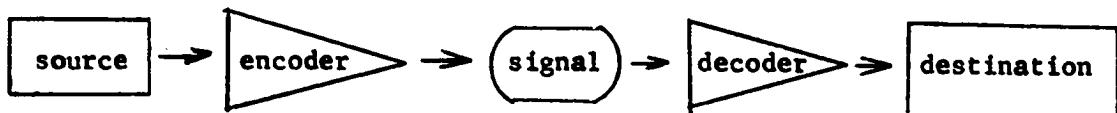
are natural results in a Hitler rally. But when the message is communicated by radio, the listeners do not have the same close proximity, and group psychology is consequently not at work.¹⁰

2. Models for radio communication:

The first significant communications model was proposed by Shannon and Weaver. With electronic communication in mind, they came up with what they felt were the five ingredients in communication:

1. source; 2. transmitter; 3. signal; 4. receiver; 5. destination.¹¹

Later on, Wilbur Schramm, another pioneer in the field of communication theory, adapted the Shannon and Weaver model. First, he maintained that communication always requires at least three elements: 1. source; 2. message; 3. destination. Expanding this, Schramm added: encoding; and decoding. "Encoding" is the process of putting into some code what is in our head. The code we use influences how well the message will be transmitted. In the process of "decoding", the receiver understands the message in terms of his own background experience and environment and attitudes toward the subject matter. The following model resulted from the addition of the process of encoding and decoding:



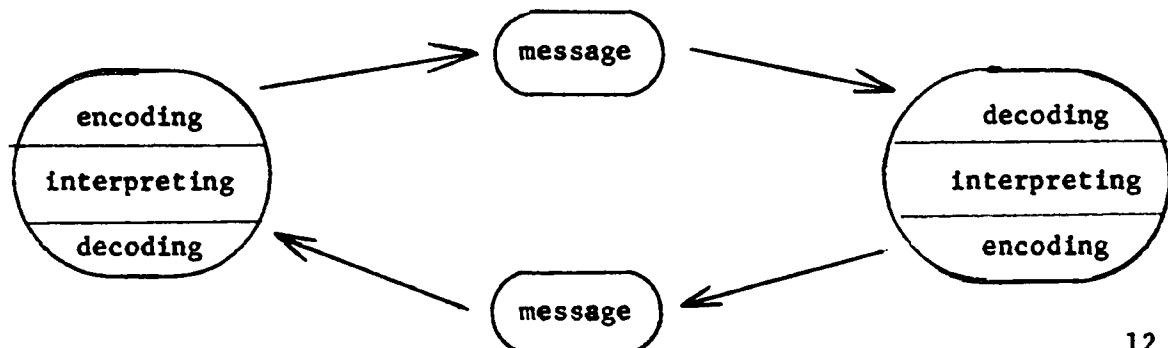
Actually, Schramm maintained, the communication process is endless.

It does not start somewhere and end somewhere, because each of us is

¹⁰ J.L. Aranguren, Human Communication (New York: McGraw - Hill, 1957), p. 116.

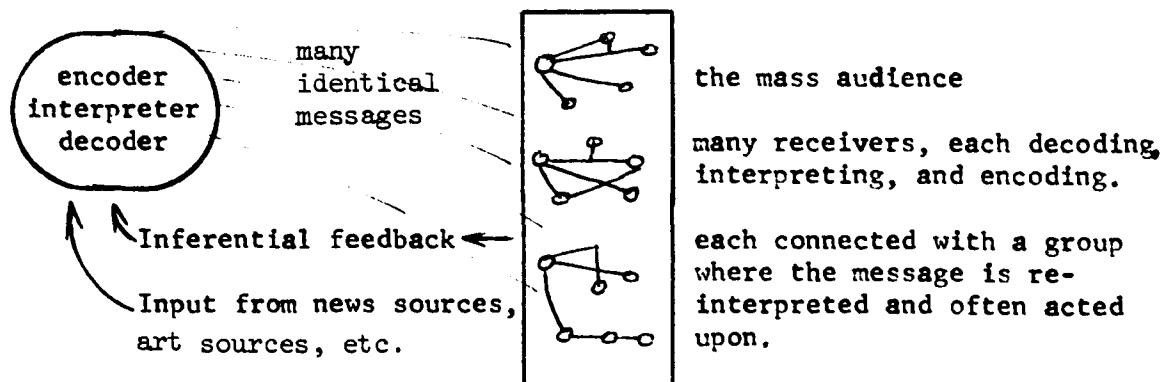
¹¹ Hixson, p. 225.

always encoding and decoding. In reality, we have something like this:



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Now, to carry these principles forward into a mass communication model, Schramm argued that although radio communication, by its nature seems to minimize the possibility of feedback, it must be remembered that each individual listener is connected to a group, or groups -- family, close friends, people at work, etc. These people talk about the broadcast, re-interpret it and encode it in a group opinion, and perhaps in group action. Therefore, Schramm came up finally with the following mass communication model:



Men by the names of Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet developed a Mass media model based on their theory of the "two-step flow of

¹²Ibid., pp. 223-225.

¹³Schramm, pp. 20-21.

communication." They argued that: 1. messages flow from impersonal sources (mass media) to opinion leaders; 2. opinion leaders then influence the non-leaders (who are less affected by the impersonal sources) by means of word of mouth.¹⁴ In a way, this appears to be related to Schramm's mass media model (directly above). Schramm finds group interaction to be significant. But the "two-step flow of communication" model posits a direct line of influence from the source in two definable steps. This model has been challenged by the assertion that there is actually multi-step flow.

McLuhan's model appears essentially to be: "the medium is the message." Although not diagrammatically defined, McLuhan's model shows that the mass media themselves are the message and are powerful shapers of the structures of society. In his model, technological media are to be seen as "staples or natural resources" exactly as are coal, and cotton and oil. Societies' social patterns of organization are largely the result of such staples.¹⁵ McLuhan does not hesitate to maintain that mankind's continual docile acceptance of media has imprisoned humanity within its walls.¹⁶

3. Contributions of radio research

Research, seemingly, has gone hand in hand with the development of radio communication models. The role the audience plays has been

¹⁴ Hixson, p. 227.

¹⁵ McLuhan, p. 35.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the key topical starting point for the research that has developed over the years since the advent of radio.

Early research seems to have developed in tune with the relatively one-way flow of communication idea. Mass media was pictured as a giant, hypodermic needle. "In the prominent hands of a few silled operators the needle persistently pecks and plunges away at the passively poised body of masses."¹⁷ Some argued that the needle was a depressant, and some that it was a stimulant. Lasswell's formulation for getting at the art of communication became a classic for his time: Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect.¹⁸ DeFleur feels that this approach is unidirectional, and minimizes interaction effects or the whole feedback phenomenon.¹⁹ In my view, it has also contributed to the concept of the mass media as mass manipulators. Audience research, in this perspective, is carried out by acquiring an understanding of the public's tastes, opinions, behaviour, etc., with the purpose of equipping the communicators to be better manipulators.

Klapper describes a new orientation away from the "hypodermic needle effect" toward a "situational" approach which he calls "phenomenistic." To describe it, he says: "It is in essence a shift away from the tendency to regard mass communication as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, toward a view of the media as influences, working amid other influences, in a total situation."²⁰

¹⁷ Melvin DeFleur and Otto N. Larsen, The Flow of Information (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), p. 23.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communication (New York: Free Press, 1960), p. 5.

Besides the radio communication itself, Klapper points to a wide variety of other influencing variables, such as: the audience's image of sources; the simple passage of time; the group orientation of the audience member and the degree to which he values group membership; the activity of opinion leaders; the social aspects of the situation during and after exposure to the media; and the degree to which the audience is forced to play a role; the personality pattern of the audience member; his social class, the level of his frustrations; the nature of the media in a free enterprise system and the availability of "social mechanisms" for implementing action drives.²¹

Klapper believes that because of all of these influencing variables, mass communication functions far more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of change. Conversion is the rarest result of mass communications.²²

To clarify Klapper's belief, it would probably be quite helpful to briefly discuss several of the influencing variables that he mentions which contribute to the reinforcement phenomenon:

1. Selective exposure, selective perception, selective retention.

selective exposure - "The tendency of people to expose themselves to mass communications in accord with their existing opinions and interests and to avoid unsympathetic material."

selective perception - people perceive what they "want to perceive, have habitually perceived, or expect some form of social or

²¹ Ibid., p. 3.

²² Ibid., p. 15.

physical reward for perceiving."

selective retention - people retain what they want to retain or are conditioned to retain.

2. Groups and group norms. People are likely to be interested in and to carry opinions or points of view that group to which they belong to do.

3. Interpersonal dissemination of the content of communications. People tell friends about mass communications they may have missed, and thus supplement the reinforcing capabilities of the original communications.

4. Opinion leadership. Research has focused on the role of the opinion leader in processes of opinion or behaviour change, but the opinion leader also functions in the service of reinforcement, largely because he is usually similar in many ways to the people he influences.²³

Because of all these factors, the audience does have the capability of at least what Schramm describes as "inferential feedback." If mass media is going to be effective, it must take this "inferential feedback" seriously.

Before concluding this discussion of the contributions of audience research to our understanding of the nature of radio, mention should be made of McLuhan's contribution. Although McLuhan may recognize the media as influences among other influences, he lays a great deal of emphasis on the media themselves as tremendous formative powers

²³Ibid., pp. 15-37.

in society, determinative of social patterns of organization. I believe that, although McLuhan's conviction of the media as powerful forces should be recognized, it should be done so only with an awareness of the significance of all the influences that Klapper has indicated.

Chapter 3

POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS FOR THE USE OF RADIO
INDICATED BY RVOG'S THEOLOGICAL STANCE

Radio Voice of the Gospel is a form of Christian mission to Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Its central goal is to reach the non-Christian and to guide him into the living church. Its ultimate aim: conversion. Secondary to this is the goal of spiritual nurture. It holds to a very radical and specific message -- that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture -- and believes that this message is the only means of salvation. It is in Jesus Christ that God's decisive Word comes to all men. The relationship broken at the Fall is overcome only in and through Jesus Christ as he re-opens the way of communication, offering salvation to all who believe and have faith in Him. RVOG carries a very broad understanding of the Gospel as speaking to and ministering to man in all his needs but holds fast to the understanding that it is the identity given by salvation through faith in Jesus Christ that gives meaning to all other activity in life. Finally, it believes that this message is relevant to, and the only means of salvation for all people in the world.

Having a thorough picture of RVOG's theological stance of which the above is only an outline, and an outline of RVOG's operation, and having discussed the nature of radio, we are now in a position to determine the possibilities and limitations for the use of radio indicated by RVOG's theological stance, and to see how well RVOG has shown an understanding of these.

This chapter will discuss possibilities and limitations and point to trends, principles and policy of RVOG which appear to reflect an understanding of these. Chapter 4 will provide an in-depth examination of RVOG operation and attempt to show the extent to which it is effective by the way it has shown an understanding of radio possibilities and limitations in practical operation.

Possibilities:

1. Radio covers a large area and can potentially reach a large number of people simultaneously. RVOG believes that the message of salvation is for all people. Their stated goal is to reach the "widest possible audience". Certainly it is a tremendous opportunity to have the potential of reaching an enormous number of people in an instant. With that in mind, RVOG has established fourteen area studios all over Africa, Asia, and the Middle East to serve their countries. Two powerful 100,000 watt transmitters located in Addis Ababa make sure the message is received loud and clear in the target areas where there is a potential audience of one billion people.

Radio's potential for reaching a lot of people can also be used positively in line with RVOG's principle of sola scriptura. As the Reformation took advantage of the printing press, so mission today can take advantage of the radio. Luther called for self-determination of one's religious belief based on personal confrontation with the Scriptures. A mass-produced and mass-circulated written Word made this possible.¹

¹James E. Sellers, The Outsider and the Word of God; a study in Christian communication (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 106.

The principle is somewhat the same with radio.

2. The medium for radio communication is sound waves through air. Because of this, receivers can be located anywhere. This characteristic certainly also serves in the interest of proclaiming the Gospel to the widest possible audience. It is of special value for radio broadcasting in the countries that are the target areas for RVOG's broadcasting -- predominantly non-developed countries where there are many areas unaccessible to the Church. Of course the fact that radio receivers can be anywhere does not automatically mean they will be. RVOG, in determining target areas took this into consideration (see p. 26).

3. Radio is a public medium. Radio only uses sound waves and thus only requires an ear at the other end. Taken together, these two characteristics have the following implications: radio does not require personal engagement. The listener has the freedom to turn the radio on or off at will. Or, he can listen while doing something else (like house-work). No response is required. Thus there is no pressure at all on the listener to act in a certain way. RVOG's goal is to reach all people with the message of the Gospel as the only means of salvation. Very often non-Christians cannot be reached by personal evangelism efforts. The message of the Gospel is a radical message and a "stumbling block" to them. When an evangelist comes personally to call on them, he often finds a closed door. They do not want to be personally confronted. Because radio does not involve person-to-person confrontation, and because it does not demand personal engagement, the message of the Gospel may be able to go through the closed door and be picked up by someone who may not otherwise

receive it. But even though there is no demand for personal engagement, is the person likely to listen to a message in which he is not interested? Maybe. This will depend in large part on how the message is presented. Because radio does not demand personal engagement, it is one step ahead of the person-to-person encounter in trying to reach the listener. It can now present its message in such a way that the person will listen. RVOG carries a broad understanding of the Gospel as speaking to and ministering to man in all his needs. We have seen how this is reflected in program guidelines. The "30-70 Principle" was designed with the non-Christian listener in mind. Thus, for example, a typical half-hour evening broadcast to Madagascar has an educational segment about the world around us, followed by a chat about farming problems, a vocal solo performance entitled "Sings My Heart!", concluding with a five minute segment entitled "Let's Worship Together".² The non-Christian listener is not bombarded with a hard-sell demand for conversion but is led into the areas of geography, agriculture and art, and invited to discover how all of these dimensions are given added depth and meaning in the context of God's purposes for his people and his call to communion with Him and His Church through Jesus Christ.

4. Radio communication can be very personal. Although the radio communicator knows he is talking to a mass audience, he can address them as individuals. This is possible because most often radio listeners are

²Gordon C. Ruud, "A Study of the Nature of Faith as Encounter" (unpublished ThD dissertation, School of Theology at Claremont, 1968), Appendix.

either alone or with a very small group. Much has been mentioned about RVOG's conviction that it is the very personal, incarnate reality of the Gospel living in a body of believers that is to be communicated. The Gospel is a personal message. Its ultimate call for repentance, conversion, and faith is a personal challenge to the individual. We have seen how radio conveys the emotional overtones of sound, including the human voice, and can give an immediacy which connects the event directly with the perceiver.³ Christian radio broadcasting must take advantage of its opportunities to be personal. It must empathize with its listeners.⁴ This requires the "personal engagement to the Biblical Christ" that Dr. Sigurd Aske talked about.

What is RVOG doing? The whole commitment to the training of radio workers involves equipping radio writers and producers with the skills to communicate in an intimate, personal way. As will be shown, on the area studio level there is also concern for the avoidance of professionalism. To an extent, this is a problem at the local Ethiopia radio studio. For example, some producers have been strong lay leaders in their local churches and have been involved with people on the grass-roots level. Some have not. The whole principle of church-studio relations attempts to keep radio producers in touch with what is happening on the grass-roots level in the church. We will see in detail how this is working out in Chapter 4.

Of course, even though much can be done to address the listener

³John Bachman, The Church in the World of Radio - Television New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 20.

⁴Malcolm Boyd, Crisis in Communication (New York: Doubleday, 1957), p. 109.

in an intimate, personal way, radio can never achieve the same kind of relationship that is represented in the person to person relationship. It is this very fact that is the ground for the limitations of radio for RVOG's mission, which we shall now turn to.

Limitations

The basic limitations for RVOG's use of radio seem to result from the nature of the relationship between sender and listener.

Sender and listener are completely separated.

Radio is a public medium, and consequently speaks to a large, heterogeneous, and anonymous audience.

Because radio is only one of many influences operating in any given situation, the listener is likely to be reinforced and only rarely converted.

All of these, taken together, appear to be enormous limitations for RVOG, whose challenge is to communicate a very radical and specific message -- that of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture, and whose ultimate aim is to guide the non-Christian into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ by conversion. Normally, in the so-called "secular" arena, the mass communicator must conduct serious audience research to gather as much information as he can about his audience, and then seek to cater to their desires so they will listen. Even then the audience is still large, and rather heterogeneous and anonymous. The Christian communicator must likewise conduct serious audience research, but is faced with one entirely unique challenge: he cannot simply cater to his audiences' desires. John Bachman has pointed

to the fact that the Christian's position is "in the world but not of the world." "No matter how deeply we are involved in the world of radio and television, our ultimate orientation comes from elsewhere."⁵ Boyd reminds us that the Gospel is a scandal and stumbling block for the non-Christian.⁶ Kraemer tells us that the peculiar character and place of communication of the Christian message lies in the fact that its inherent message lies in the fact that its inherent aim is not persuasion, but conversion.⁷ How can we expect such a message to take root in the listener who is so distant and unrelated to the sender?

Christian communicators have suggested two important perspectives:

1. "In the world, but not of it." Be relevant, but do not sacrifice the true message of the Gospel.
2. Place the Gospel into the total context of life.

1. "In the world, but not of it": Tillich's advice to Christian communicators, formulated on the basis of an understanding of the uniqueness of the Christian message is: "We can speak to people only if we participate in their concern, not by condescension, but by sharing in it. We can point to the Christian answer only if, on the other hand, we are not identical with them."⁸ These two sides of the issue must be kept in mind. Malcolm Boyd sees both ends of the spectrum of Christian

⁵Bachman, p. 26.

⁶Boyd, p. 26.

⁷Hendrik Kraemer, The Communication of the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), p. 28.

⁸Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 207.

broadcasting at fault: those who "preach", using narrow religious language, and really ignoring their audiences; and those who react violently against this and work so hard at being relevant that they forfeit the true message of the Gospel. Radio communicators who feel that they must fit their message to the public desires often present a lukewarm version of the Gospel, devoid of its "scandalous" character.⁹

RVOG's theological stance appears to reflect Boyd's perspective. Its commitment to identifying the saving message of the Gospel is clear. It also holds to the conviction that the Gospel is relevant to all people. We have seen that this means expressing the Gospel in the language, culture and thought patterns of the people; but more than that it means sharing the personal dynamic reality of the Gospel from the local situation. These convictions should lead to what Lundgren defined as a strong "identification with" the message without losing the unique and true character of the message of the Gospel. This has been otherwise expressed by Gudmund Gjelsten, first Audience Relations Officer at RVOG:

In Christian communication there sometimes has been a tendency to go to extremes. On the one hand, there are those Christian communicators who concentrate so heavily on the message that a closer look at the persons for whom it is intended is more or less ignored. This is a misunderstood 'message-centeredness'.

On the other hand, there are Christian communicators who are so absorbed in analyzing human conditions and needs that the message does not get the proper attention, the result of which is a very pragmatic and distorted presentation of the message.

Christian communication should strive to give a balanced attention to the message and the persons for whom the message is intended.¹⁰

⁹Boyd, pp. 52-53.

¹⁰Sigurd Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," (Paper prepared for the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Helsinki, Finland, July 30-August 11, 1963), p. 19.

What must be done to reflect this perspective?

a. Christian broadcasting should reflect the church in action.

A 1963 article in Frontier magazine, discussing "Christians and the Growth of Broadcasting in Developing Countries", advocates the importance of the broadcast organizations relating to indigenous churches rather than missionary societies. Only when the programming reflects the church in action will the content of the Gospel really become meaningful.¹¹

b. Training of nationals for radio work. An ex-Far Eastern Broadcasting Company missionary, speaking about missionary radio in 1973, suggested that there should be much more training of nationals for radio work to make possible greater relevancy.¹²

c. Encouragement of local programming. The same missionary decries the dependence upon American program supply of mission stations around the world. Programs are too often totally out of the cultural context.¹³

d. Encouragement of innovative broadcasting. Indigenous operations often fear trying new communication methods, or fear disagreeing with established principles because their operation depends to such a great extent on overseas funds.¹⁴

Reflecting on RVOG principles, can we say that the above recom-

¹¹E.G. Wendell, "The Church on the Air: Christians and the Growth of Broadcasting in Developing Countries," Frontier, V-VI (Autumn 1963) 169-172.

¹²Barrie Doyle, "Missionary Radio at the Crossroads," Christianity Today, (November 23, 1973), p. 54.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

mendations have been understood and implemented? I believe that they have, and that in addition, RVOG would add to that list the important areas of audience research and audience relations.

As to points "a" and "c", RVOG has, from the beginning, committed itself to the principle that service to the local churches is fundamentally important. The development of area studios bears this out. Their first principle is that "all programs are produced by the churches in the areas where they are heard" (see pg. 32). Policy point "4" of the "Five Point Policy and Purpose" (see pg. 33), "To assist the churches in follow-up work," is partly an attempt to build a strong bridge between studio and church to insure that the programming does indeed reflect the church in action.

As to point "b" above - the training of nationals - RVOG's fifth policy of the "Five Point Policy and Purpose" (see pg. 33) states clearly RVOG's commitment to the training of radio workers. That this means training of nationals will become clear in Chapter 6.

Concerning point "d" above, we will see how this has been a big issue for the local church related to the Ethiopia area studio. In their whole discussion of the inter-relation of proclamation and development, the church decries the situation where earmarked overseas funds are tying their hands and preventing them from pursuing their own convictions. We will also see how over the years RVOG has shown a concern for relevance by stressing the importance of audience research and audience relations work on both station and studio level. The Department of Audience Research and Planning on the station level is a service agency to the area studios and their sponsoring churches. At the studio level

is the tremendous importance of audience relations and follow-up ministry. The purpose of this effort certainly is to get to know their audience and to reflect the church in action and so develop relevant programming which will empathize with the audience. But beyond this is the very fundamental understanding that as the communication of the Gospel begins in the church, it must be followed up by the church. Recognizing the unlikelihood of conversion by radio and recognizing the unsuitability of a generally impersonal medium to the task of communicating a personal and radically unique message, follow-up ministry exists for the very purpose of attempting to insure that the communication does not stop with the radio program. To this end supplemental contact is the goal through other kinds of media such as literature or cassettes, or Bible Correspondence Courses, or personal contact in a variety of ways. Just as an example, Gudmund Gjelsten, first RVOG Audience Relations Officer laid down a plan for the training of local audience relations workers through local churches who could in several ways build bridges between the listener and the church in the area: personally call on listeners in a village, contact village leaders (who usually have radios and very often serve as opinion leaders), distribute cassettes.¹⁵ As another example, take the Bible Correspondence Course. Through this means a bridge between the listener and the church can be built. A non-Christian listener is attracted by a program, but unless the church takes an initiative, it is unlikely that the message of the Gospel will really "go home". Provision for a Bible Correspondence Course through the mail can overcome

¹⁵Gudmund Gjelsten, "Audience Relations Report"(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, June 5, 1962).

that and lead the interested listeners into the living church.

That through all these efforts toward relevance the true message of the Gospel is not sacrificed or distorted is reflected in the "30-70 principle" concerning the balancing of programming.

We will see, in Chapter 4, to what extent RVOG is effective in a all the above areas relating to the perspective "In the world, but not of it".

We come now to the second perspective suggested by Christian communicators in the attempt to bridge the gap between sender and listener in the communication of the Christian message:

2. Place the Gospel into the total context of life: William Wineke, writer for Christianity Today (1971), addressing the subject of evangelical radio, says that no medium has greater potential than radio for communicating the Gospel to the man who does not attend church. Unfortunately, this potential is tragically forfeited by the way the Gospel is communicated in a very narrow way. He suggests that the goal of the Christian station should be "to place 'religion' into the total context of God's sovereignty over human life."¹⁶ Bachman supports this by asking that the Christian communicator encourage broadcasts "which take into account the many dimensions of the human personality, which awaken an individual and broaden his horizons, which stimulate his growth through recreation, inspiration, and enlightenment."¹⁷ RVOG's conviction that

¹⁶William R. Wineke, "The Problems and Prospects of Evangelical Radio", Christianity Today, (January 1, 1971), 4,5.

¹⁷Bachman, p. 27.

the Gospel speaks to the whole man supports this concept thoroughly. The most direct reflection of it is found in the "30-70 principle". By proclaiming a broad rather than a narrow interpretation of the Gospel, RVOG can deal with the whole spectrum of human issues, and consequently be more likely to attract the non-Christian listener. We will see in the coming chapter how, specifically, this principle is interpreted and how effectively it is implemented.

Are there any other limitations of radio for RVOG's task? Closely related to those just dealt with are two that perhaps should be singled out: 1. Radio is only one of many media working together to affect people; 2. Radio is transient -- it is intended to be consumed immediately.

Because radio is only one of many media operating in any given situation we have seen that reinforcement is more likely than conversion. It would certainly be to the advantage of the proclamation of the Gospel by radio if this were clearly understood. The communicators could then explore and develop other media such as literature, films, cassettes, and people themselves, to be directed simultaneously to the radio broadcast and/or before and after it. These other media could add to the number of influences reaching the listener and probably increase the likelihood of receptivity. This would also help overcome the limitation of the transiency of radio.

In many cases RVOG area studios are part of mass media centers, and for those who are not, there is increasing suggestion that they hook in their radio programming with other media. Having said that, however, it is difficult to show that integration of media is really taking place,

aside from a few examples. We will see one example of the integration of literature and radio media in a project entitled "Bible by Radio" through the local Yemissrach Dimts area studio in Ethiopia.

To conclude this chapter on possibilities and limitations of radio for RVOG, it is essential to be reminded of one fundamental principle in Christian communication: Even though it is the Christian communicator's job to do his best in communicating the Gospel, whether or not the Gospel is communicated is not ultimately dependent on his ability to communicate. "The primary author of the effective transmission of the message is the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸

¹⁸Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," p. 24.

Chapter 4

EFFECTIVENESS OF RADIO VOICE OF THE GOSPEL AS A FORM OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

We have established that RVOG's policy and principles suggest an awareness of the possibilities and limitations for the use of radio in Christian mission. This chapter is an attempt to determine how effective RVOG is in implementing them. This will be done in terms of two levels of relationships: 1. First, the station - studio relationship; and 2. the studio - church relationship. At this second relationship level, only one church - studio relationship will be taken as an example, namely that of the Yemissrach Dimts studio and the Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia.

STATION - STUDIO RELATIONSHIP

The broadcast motto adopted for the whole of RVOG (including all program centers) is: "Proclaiming Christ to His World." Dr. Aske, in his report to the LWF just after the station was opened, spelled out the interpretation and the significance of this broadcast motto:

Experience has shown that the Christian Church is doing a far better job talking to itself than in proclaiming Christ to His World. Being aware of that weakness may help us to avert the danger of Radio Voice of the Gospel degenerating into an extremely expensive international Christian house telephone.¹

In light of RVOG's general purpose of service to the churches,

¹Sigurd Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1963-1969" (Paper prepared for the Fifth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Porto Alegre, Brazil, July 14-21, 1970), p. 90.

it is essential to realize that although communication begins in the local church, its goal is to reach outside its perimeters to bring all men into communion with the church and Christ Jesus. The defining of such a "target" directly influences its principles and policy. But having said that, Aske also makes it crystal clear that it is the proclamation of Jesus Christ that is central. In 1970 Aske referred to a prevailing situation where development was a predominant concern for mission work ... so much so that, for many, mission became problematic when Jesus Christ was proclaimed. With this in mind, Aske remarked: "It remains a constant source of thanksgiving that the LWF defined the purpose of RVOG without apology in Kerygmatic terms: 'Proclaiming Christ to His World.'"²

Principles and Policies.

What, then, are the principles and policy that have developed? All RVOG programming is based on a number of principles endorsed by the sponsoring bodies. Three which are listed as primary are:

1. All programs (except news programs) are produced by the churches in the areas where they are heard.
2. No broadcasts are scheduled unless there is a minimum of half an hour daily, to the same area, in the same language, at the same time and frequency.
3. Programming is balanced according to the so-called "30-70 principle."³

²Sigurd Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel (London: Morrison and Gibb, 1960's), pp. 5,6.

³Sigurd Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963" (Paper Prepared for the

Out of, and in addition to a number of principles which were laid down, RVOG developed a "Five Point Policy and Purpose" which is as follows:

1. To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation.
2. To strengthen the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programs that nurture believers in their Christian faith, and to keep the challenge and responsibility of evangelism constantly before the churches.
3. To promote education and culture through the broadcast of educational and cultural programs.
4. To assist the churches in follow-up work.
5. To train radio workers.⁴

Because there is some overlapping of ideas between the three principles and the five-point policy and purpose, I have set them all down together. Principles "1" and "2" will be discussed separately. Then principle "3" will be discussed in conjunction with the first three points of the five-point policy and purpose. Finally, points "4" and "5" of the five-point policy and purpose will be discussed separately.

Principle #1: All programs (except news programs) are produced by the churches in the area where they are heard. RVOG's purpose of "service to the churches" has already been made explicitly clear. This principle

Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, Helsinki, Finland, July 30-August 11, 1963), p. 27.

⁴Ibid.

is drawn directly from the purpose. To reiterate very briefly, RVOG is not an outside institution or organization sending programs to all the target areas. It is a voice from within these areas speaking to them. Programming that will have the greatest relevance must originate in the local area, and must be prepared by people from that area who are obviously most in tune with the social, cultural situation and best able to speak to their people. But this must be taken even a step further. The principle says that the programs are to be produced by churches in the area. In other words, the studio staff, in order to insure that ultimately communication begins in the church, must be a voice not only of the area in a general way, but specifically a voice of the church. As will be seen a bit later, policy points "4" and "5" work towards insuring this principle. Although the history of the development of church-studio relations demonstrates different ways and levels of church influence, it has always been a goal that the programming reflect the church's influence. The studio, more specifically the audience relations office, to be sure, can assist in pointing to what it feels are areas of need. But it is the living church that is in personal touch with the people and their needs that must give guidance to the studio so programming will reflect a response to those needs.

A closer look at church-station relations will come later in the station-studio discussion, and specifically in the studio-church discussion. But an immediate general question must be asked. Does all programming originate in the local areas under sponsorship of the church? To begin with, the principle carries one inbuilt exception: news programs. All news programs, which are broadcast in several languages to various

target areas, originate at the RVOG station headquarters. Because RVOG headquarters serves as the central transmitting station for all the studios, and because of the necessity of at least relative immediacy of news broadcasting, it must originate at RVOG station headquarters. The news broadcasting tends to reflect in a general way the priorities of the news agencies to which RVOG subscribes [United Press International (U.P.I.), Associated Press (A.P.), Reuters, Radio Deutsche Welle and the B.B.C.] which are all "western"; but as of now, there are no other significant news agencies. To try to overcome this problem to some extent, and also to try to make news as relevant to the area as possible, a team of news writers and translators from different countries helps design the news broadcast to their areas of the world, all reporting on big international news, but beyond that, choosing items of greater local interest to be broadcast to the area they represent.

Are there any other exceptions to the principle? In a way, yes. There is a significant amount of English and French programming which takes place at the RVOG station headquarters. How can this be explained? This program department certainly does not have the immediacy to a church that the area studios do. But as this program department was established, centralized programming in those languages was provided at the request of the church in South Africa, and French programming at the request of the church in West Africa. As it has turned out, the programming serves more of an area than that; and judging from intense discussions in 1974 at the station regarding the program department, just exactly whom they are serving and how is not explicitly clear. I asked Rev. Lundgren, Station Director, how the work of the Station Program Department fits in

with the first principle of the necessity that programs be produced by local area churches. He replied:

"English and French station program production should be seen only as supplementary to area studio production and should not only be at the request of the area churches but also coordinated. The development into church unrelated production is a clear contradiction to the principle referred to."⁵

Principle #2: No broadcasts are scheduled unless there is a minimum of half an hour daily, to the same area, in the same language, at the same time and frequency. Aske explains that the reasons for this have to do with the nature of radio and the cultural situation in the target area, and that basically, for that half-hour, RVOG is that target area's own station.⁶ I do not have a further explanation of that, but reference to an issue under discussion in 1974 illuminates the matter. Ethiopia has several major languages. Up to 1974, the Yemissrach Dims area studio in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia prepared a daily half-hour at first and then more later on of programming in the Amharic language. This was broadcast to all of Ethiopia at regular times in the morning and evening on an established frequency. In 1974, the Yemissrach Dims board (representing church leaders) suggested that additional languages be used in broadcasting so that more people might be reached and more relevant programming be accomplished. This proposal has come under intense debate from both studio staff and from an RVOG administrative point of view. The arguments against it represent effectiveness questions

⁵Manfred Lundgren, Personal Interview, Radio Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1975.

⁶Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel, p. 5.

issuing from a concern for the nature of radio, a concern instrumental in the establishment of the second principle as outlined above. The program director at Yemissrach Dimts commented that the board saw the issue only from a theoretical point of view and did not understand the limitations of radio.⁷ Rev. Lundgren, at RVOG headquarters got specifically to the issue of effectiveness of media in his argument:

"This is a serious question not only from the point of view of established principles, but of the effectiveness of mass communication. Personally, I am skeptical about the proposal unless the criteria outlined in the principle referred to [principle #2 above] are met."⁸

In addition to the issue of media effectiveness, there appears to be another issue inherent in the principle. In keeping with RVOG's goal of reaching local target audiences, the principle reflects RVOG's task of speaking to a defined audience (same area, same language) as over and against a general audience. There is a pre-determined audience in each area invited to listen to programs designed for them.⁹

Principle #3: Programming is balanced according to the so-called 30-70 principle. Also in tune with this principle are the first three points of the five-point policy and purpose:

1. To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means

⁷Yewond-wassen, Personal Interview, Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 1975.

⁸Lundgren, Personal Interview.

⁹Manfred Lundgren, "The Broadcast Target" (Paper presented at the Radio Voice of the Gospel Seminar for Audience Relations Officers, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October 1-18, 1974), p. 1.

of salvation.

2. To strengthen the life of the Christian churches within radio reach by providing programs that nurture believers in their Christian faith, and to keep the challenge and responsibility of evangelism constantly before the churches.
3. To promote education and culture through the broadcast of educational and cultural programs.

The first of the three policy points is expressly theological.

This fundamental mandate has already been discussed in the previous chapter on theological assumptions. Also in that chapter was a discussion of the assertion that the Gospel speaks to the "whole man" in all his needs, although it is clear that the direct proclamation of the new life possible through Jesus Christ is what gives the identity to a person and gives meaning to the Gospel's concern for man in all his needs. These assumptions, I believe, stand behind the "30-70 formula" and the corresponding second and third policy points.

What does "30-70" mean? Basically, it means that 30% of all programming must be directly evangelical and 70% must be informational. "Evangelical" includes "sermons, worship services, Bible reading, addresses, meditations, religious drama, religious counselling, hymns and sacred music". "Informational" includes "news, interviews (on current affairs), questions and answers (e.g. regarding public health and personal hygiene and agriculture), educational features, stories, entertainment, secular music."¹⁰

¹⁰ Sigurd Aske, "Preaching Christ to His World", Lutheran World, XIII:1 (1966), 71.

Why "30-70" and not "70-30"? To review, although RVOG is serving the church, it is serving a church which, according to RVOG's guidelines, is using radio as a medium in its ministry to reach non-Christians. Therefore it has a task to "make programs that are not automatically turned off by the normal, average non-Christian listener, programs which nevertheless 'proclaim Christ to His World'."¹¹ The "30-70" formulation, as a general guideline, seems to work most effectively towards that end. But although it is important as a general guideline, Lundgren asks that it indeed be seen as a guideline, and in a certain perspective.

I have found great difficulty in being too dogmatic about this, because it reflects in my view the division of spiritual and physical needs, which is inconsistent with our understanding and our theology of man. I would rather see man as a creation of God, as one entity, which cannot be divided, and must be served as a whole being. It is the individual and local needs that determine where the emphasis should be.¹²

Lundgren has emphasized the necessary flexibility of the guideline, depending on the "individual and local needs." Here again we are reminded of RVOG's purpose. But the statement also clearly shows that Lundgren sees it from a theological perspective. It is not possible to argue that the 70% portion of programming is strictly a secular undertaking to draw listeners who may then be confronted with the "Gospel" in the 30% portion. The 70% portion may certainly be attractive to non-Christians because of its design and more broadly based issues; but the Gospel, as it has been broadly defined, is behind all programming. In addition, some programs may contain both sides of this formula. Finally,

¹¹Aske, Radio Voice of the Gospel, p. 6.

¹²Manfred Lundgren, Personal Interview, Radio Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 12, 1974.

it is very important to recognize the fact that as the programming units are put together into the total half hour or more of broadcast time, careful consideration is given to the order so that a rather unified picture develops, and behind it a concern for the "whole man".

That is the theory, and of course it is always a goal, never perfectly implemented. As has been mentioned, the prime concern is to reach the non-Christian. But as can be seen in policy point "2", there is also a concern for "nurture" of established Christians. The policy points "2" and "3", taken together, then, have three concerns: 1. evangelism; 2. nurture; 3. educational and developmental instruction. The 30-70 formula and its implications stand behind these concerns.

All of this considered, the programmer's task is very challenging. And I think that there have been some difficulties in the exact interpretation of the formula and the task of making the theory of "service to the whole man" come to implementation in programming. A look at the program analysis forms which all studios must complete periodically reflects one way of looking at it.

The program analysis form is to cover one week of programming, all programs names must be listed, and there are at least four key areas of concern: 1. Whom are we trying to reach? This category is broken down to Christian/non-Christian; level of education; and rural/urban. 2. What are we trying to do? This is broken down to a. proclaim Gospel of Christ; b. strengthen life of churches; c. promote education and culture. 3. What are we saying? a. Direct proclamation of the Gospel. b. Indirect proclamation. c. General information. 4. How are we saying

it? This is the type of format used.

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The most recent program analysis form created by the new Program Resources Office at RVOG is set up differently, but with most of the same areas covered. However, the Program Resources Officer found that there was confusion and misunderstanding with regard to points "2" and "3" of the old form and has subsumed the two under one question: "What function of broadcasting was this program meant to perform?", under which are the categories: news, information, evangelistic, nurture, entertainment, church service, educational/developmental, other.¹⁴ This seems to recognize the idea of the "30-70 formula", but most specifically to reflect the first three policy points where the three key thrusts seem to be nurture, evangelism, educational/ developmental. Obviously, though, a program may not be able to be neatly defined all the way down the line. For instance it may be both informational and evangelistic. Or an informational program may be followed by an evangelistic program, (a half-hour music program followed by a five-minute devotional intended for non-Christians). Or, a program intended primarily for non-Christians may serve more of the so-called physical needs of the Christian listener.

It is far from possible in the scope of this paper to survey the ways in which all the studios have handled these guidelines and understood and implemented them. But the issues have been spelled out. A discussion of some of the debate on program policy and the "30-70 formula"

¹³ "Program Analysis Form" used by RVOG up to 1974, Radio Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

¹⁴ "Program Analysis Form" used by RVOG after 1974, Radio Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

on the local studio level will be found later in the treatment of Yemissrach Dimts (Ethiopia area studio).

It is now time to move to points "4" and "5" of the "Five Point Policy and Purpose."

Policy Point "4": To assist the churches in follow-up work.

Again it is clear, by the language in this policy statement that the focus of concern is the "church". The church, from which the communication originated, must follow through on its message in order for its ultimate goal of conversion and communion to be effected. The church is not simply communicating words but is communicating the incarnate reality of the Gospel in and through its members. And because of the nature of radio (a couple of its key characteristics being the transiency of the communicated message, and the distance created between sender and receiver), in order for this very personal message to take root, the church must engage itself in follow-up ministry. The ultimate goal: "guiding the listener into the living church in his home community."¹⁵

Some of the guidelines for audience relations work are spelled out in the 1963 LWFBS Report:

Audience research and audience relations have been built into staff and station structure ... Program promotion will be - as is indeed basic audience research - a cooperative effort by the area studios and the station. Follow-up activities will take a decentralized approach, aiming at guiding the interested listener into contact with the living church in his home community.¹⁶

Gudmund Gjelsten, the first RVOG Station Audience Relations Of-

¹⁵Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," p. 18.

¹⁶Ibid.

ficer, pointed to the tasks of both audience research and audience relations. Referring to Audience Research, he spoke of the task of Christian communication as the attempt to give balanced attention to both its message and the people for whom the message is designed. It does have a definite message, but in order to insure its effectiveness it must be tuned to the needs of its specific target audience with which it is thoroughly acquainted. Referring to audience relations, he pointed to the danger of the passing value of a program unless there is follow-up.¹⁷

How does this work at RVOG? As stated, it is a cooperative effort by both studios and station. From the beginning, the task of the audience relations officer at the Station has been to guide and assist the studios in developing an audience relations program that would have close ties with the church in its operation. Let me refer to some of the work done in the early years. Information will be gleaned from the records in the audience relations files at RVOG.

Gjelsten, the first Audience Relations Officer, appears to have laid heavy emphasis on tying audience relations work directly into the church. A lecture at a Pastor's Refresher Course at the Lutheran Seminary in Addis Ababa defined audience relations and then went on to give in detail the potential role of the local pastor in audience relations (i.e. promotional work, creation of listening groups, creation of support for correspondence courses and assistance in radio distribution).¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁸Gudmund Gjelsten, "Audience Relations and the Local Pastor" (Paper presented at a Pastor's Refresher Course, Makanissa Lutheran Seminary, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), May 31, 1962.

In another paper he lays down a plan for the training of local audience relations workers (workers at studio and in church who could assist in promotion, calling on listeners, contacting schools and village leaders, distributing cassettes and getting reaction to RVOG programs).¹⁹ In addition, he attempted from the station to carry on a more general program of audience research.

Paul Volz, Gjelsten's successor, during the years from 1963 to 1967 worked to definitely establish an audience relations officer in each of the area studios who was responsible for encouraging reception reports, handling listener's letters, doing promotional work, but also for sustaining close cooperation with the church. In 1964, some key areas of concern from the area studios were: requests for help on setting up correspondence courses, requests for suggestions on how to conduct audience relations workshops. Several areas conducted a "Radio Week" in the churches, radio distribution was going on, several studios had regular recording tours, some were organizing listening groups.²⁰ Volz reports that audience relations officers were doing mail follow-up, and some were doing very small-scale type of research. Promotional work was carried on in varying degrees. Eight out of twelve studios had Bible correspondence courses. For most studios, cooperation with other media was more a theory than practice, and group listening was only done in-

¹⁹ Gudmund Gjelsten, "Audience Relations Report" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, June 5, 1962).

²⁰ Paul Volz, "Audience Relations Report", (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, January 30, 1966).

formally.²¹ Again concern was expressed for the vital necessity of follow-up evangelism and work by the church. Work in that direction was found to be varied and sporadic. Volz also tried to visit, during his term, all of the area studios personally to develop and encourage audience relations work. A Studio Director's Conference also provided the opportunity for feedback and for learning. Before leaving in 1966, he gave the following report:

Having developed a basic understanding of what is involved in audience relations as step one and having brought this to the attention of studio staff both by visits and through the director's conference as step two, it is presently felt that to one degree or another all area studios need encouragement or guidance in the next phase, namely: 1. implementing audience relations plans with sufficient staff and funds. 2. better relating radio audience relations to other institutions and evangelism efforts of the churches.²²

He expressed the final concern that radio boards and sponsoring churches must get together and work together.

Volz then became assistant general director and for the next few years audience relations efforts at the station were very weak. RVOG operation became more station-oriented until this development was checked around the turn of the decade into a whole new concerted emphasis on studio-church orientation. This led to the creation of the Department of Audience Research and Planning at RVOG headquarters, one of whose major tasks was in audience research and relations. I will come to that later in this section on "Present Issues and Problems".

Obviously, I cannot give a complete picture, but the issues, and

²¹Ibid.

²²Radio Voice of the Gospel Fourth Studio Director's Conference, Agenda and Minutes, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 1968, p. 6.

some sample of the practical workings of the Station Audience Relations Office should provide an idea of RVOG's efforts in the way of implementing their fourth policy point in their early years.

Policy Point #5: To train radio workers. Again one can see here a definite link with RVOG's goal of service to the churches - the whole local orientation of its effort. National people from the local areas are to be trained in radio work so that the work of the studio can be as relevant as possible to the local area -- to the local church.

This responsibility, similar in part to audience relations, is a task taken on cooperatively between station and studio. During the early years, as studios were getting established, studio directors did most of the recruiting and also some amount of training of their staff. At the RVOG headquarters a lot of foreign staff was hired, but in the various departments national Ethiopians were taken on and trained. In 1965 the first group of national production technicians hired for training were in the advanced course and soon thereafter began full-fledged work in the technical department.

In addition, as has been seen in the discussion of audience relations work, the audience relations station office was engaged in the development of local audience relations officers and conducted training on an informal basis. But it was not until about 1965 or 1966 that training in a formal, organized, programmed way began to take place as a responsibility of the RVOG Station in its service to the studios and their churches.

This came about with the establishment of an Extension Services Department at the RVOG Station headquarters. One of the explicit tasks

of this department was to organize and provide for the training of radio workers.²³ Miss Ann Foltz, who became the director of extension services, spent some time researching training methods and philosophy and then undertook a survey of the area studios to determine training needs. In 1966 and 1967 substantial help was given to several studios to enable them to send trainees to the "All Africa Conference of Churches Writers Course" in Nairobi.²⁴ In 1968, a trainer from the extension services department ran production courses for one month at the Madagascar studio and also was guest lecturer at the All Africa Conference of Churches Radio course in Nairobi. That year a production course by correspondence was given to all studios in preparation for the 1969 Studio Director's Conference.²⁵ Training programs for area studio staff were provided in four studios in India and Ceylon and the local Yemissrach Dimts studio in Ethiopia. In addition, training programs in radio production and basic radio were given to three new technician trainees at RVOG Station headquarters.²⁶ On the basis of the reports available to me, these are the directions I see were taken. In the early 70's, with the establishment of the Department of Audience Research and Planning, the Extension Services' function became a part of that department, and the program developed over the past few years reflects the new emphasis on studio

²³"Program Director's Report: 1967", Radio Voice of the Gospel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, p. 9.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵RVOG Fourth Studio Director's Conference.

²⁶Annual Report of RVOG Program Director (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, 1967), p. 5.

orientation and increased role of RVOG as service center that took place in the early 70's. That will be discussed under RVOG present issues and problems.

Station Control Over Broadcasts.

At the Station, a broadcast editorial check is made periodically on programs from each of the area studios through an English language translation provided. At first English language translation had to be provided on all programs, but as that became an unnecessary burden, only periodic translations were required. The check was intended to see if RVOG's own standards were followed and to see if any of RVOG's franchise limitations were violated. RVOG's own standards include those indicated by program policy, which has been discussed. The program analysis forms that came from the studios also aided in the broadcast editor's analysis of the programs according to the policies. In addition, the broadcast editor checked the radio quality, the correctness of facts, and Biblical soundness. Programs also could not be sectarian or show dominance of "western" broadcasting style.²⁷

Franchise limitations are the following:

1. No program shall involve the station in partisan politics.
2. No program shall in substance or intent attack or deny the evangelical Christian faith, or contradict generally accepted codes of Christian morality.
3. No program for commercial advertising purposes shall be accepted.²⁸

²⁷Aske, "Preaching Christ to His World", p. 72.

²⁸Aske, "LWFBS: Report 1957-1963," p. 28.

The goal, of course, was not simply to check and edit, but to have dialogue with the studios as to problem areas. This was a key task of the broadcast editor. Just as a sample of the nature and extent of broadcast editing, take the year 1966. Cuts were made or program segments stopped in 1966 as follows:

--due to factual errors, wrong dates, names, facts, mainly in geography, history, and biography programs,
--four programs were stopped for dealing superficially with controversial subjects,
--three programs were stopped because of grave mistakes in quoting or interpreting the Bible,
--two programs were stopped for political involvement.
In all less than 1% of the programs required editing.²⁹

Finally, now, to bring the Station - Studio relationship discussion to a close, let us turn to the "Present Issues and Problems."

Present Issues and Problems.

The basic, all-pervading new emphasis that is an obvious development within the last few years is on area studio orientation. In an interview with Rev. Lundgren, Station Director, I asked him to explain this trend.

We can say that right from the very beginning the station operation, particularly on the program side was very studio oriented. For certain reasons, the production at the Station (program and news) has expanded very fast, and the original studio orientation was changed into a station orientation. Now the emphasis is changing, again, and we have been told by the task force on mass communications that the international headquarters will have to find a new role conception, and realize that they are not the key operators any more, but their function should be that of a consultative service. And on the basis of this, we have, over the last few years, been planning to restructure our operation towards this new emphasis, and that we have clear instructions to de-escalate program production at the Station and improve and extend our consultative and extension

²⁹"Program Director's Report: 1967", p. 10.

service.³⁰

This, in a concise way, explains the emphasis on studio orientation and generally summarizes the needed steps to implement it on the basis of the task force's recommendations. The task force referred to is one which in 1972 was appointed to examine the role of Christian mass communication in the work of the Lutheran World Federation in light of the existing situation facing the churches of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.³¹ Since RVOG is the key operation of the Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service, the task force's study carried direct recommendations for it. As can be seen above in Lundgren's statement, the major recommendations were to improve and extend the consultative and extension services. These services are to be governed by concrete needs and possibilities on the local levels. The goal through all of this is to equip the churches to be as effective as possible in their task of communication. The key danger to be avoided, recognized by Bishop Meyer (Chairman of the LWF Broadcasting Service at the time of the task force report) was that of the newly structured organization becoming a superior organization dictating and directing rather than really serving the member churches.³²

The task force itself did point to what it felt would be impor-

³⁰ Lundgren, Personal Interview, November 12, 1974.

³¹ "Joint Report of the Task Force on Mass Communication and the Task Force on Public Strategy", Lutheran World Federation, Geneva, Switzerland, April 26, 1972.

³² Heinrich Meyer, Letter to the President of the Lutheran World Federation, June 29, 1972, Geneva, Switzerland.

tant emphases in the attempt to assist the churches in their task of mass communication. Among these were: to encourage a multi-media approach, give high priority to church related follow-up work, carry on professional audience research, give greater attention to training programs.³³

To what extent have the recommendations of the Task Force been implemented? The creation of the Department of Audience Research and Planning is a direct result of the Task Force. Its key role is to be a service department for all the area studios and does this in a number of ways through an audience research office, an extension services office, and audience relations office, and a program resources office. An outline of the activities of the Department of Audience Research and Planning found in their 1974 report will give a general idea of what they do.

Research: The major research project was an intensive survey of Tanzania. In addition a study of the general audience situation in Ethiopia was conducted. A very significant accomplishment was the preparation for a pilot research project on "Social and Human Development" in Ethiopia.

Extension Services: Development of a policy document for Personnel Development and Training, production training through a number of workshops in area studios (preceded by careful evaluation of specific training needs), workshops at RVOG Station, in service training at RVOG

33 "Joint Report ..."

(of selected staff from area studios), sponsorship of trainees at training institutions in Africa, technical training at both Station and studios, language training sponsorship at Station and in Europe, audience relations officers training (at audience relations workshop at RVOG), higher training for certain qualified leaders in communication. This office also assisted in the planning of a "Consultation on the Church's Involvement in Communication" in Jos, Nigeria. Some of the new projections for 1975 included workshops in theological seminaries, multi-media training (to correspond with the fact that most radio studios were now part of multi-media centers), and another consultation on the church's involvement in communication to be held in Madagascar.

Program Resources: Since this office was just getting under way, the report was for projected work, including: development of resource materials through program exchange, and from national and international exchange, development of documentation system for storing information, exploration of new participatory methods of programming to involve the audience and the churches more directly in programming, program analysis work.

Audience Relations: The task here is directly that of service to the churches. It is still felt that the weakest point in most RVOG area studios is follow-up work. It is this that the RVOG Audience Relations Office is to be concerned with. Research to determine area studio audience relations needs resulted in a three week Audience Relations Officer's Conference at RVOG Station. Plans for 1975-76 included a series of regional workshops each dealing with expressed local needs

and another general workshop in 1976. Goals are to meet not only with audience relations officers but also church leaders. A follow-up to the "Consultation on the Church's Involvement in Communication at Jos was also felt necessary, partly due to what was felt to be manipulation by foreigners and the consultation designers.³⁴

It seems to be quite clear that service to the churches is the key consideration, and although not practically implemented to the extent desired, remains the guiding principle. The director of the Department of Audience Research and Planning holds firmly to the position that "one cannot make a clear dichotomy between church relations - studio relations and audience relations at large. They are all intrinsically related."³⁵

The outline of the 1974 activities of the Department of Audience Research and Planning illustrates the means by which "service to the churches" is carried out. An elaboration of two key activities, by lifting out some of the main issues and concerns therein, should serve as concrete examples. These two activities are: 1. the Audience Relations Workshop at RVOG; and 2. the Consultation on the Church's Involvement in Communication at Jos, Nigeria.

RVOG's goal in service is to equip the churches to be as effective as possible in their task of communication. Ato Menkir Esayas, the

³⁴Menkir Esayas, "Radio Voice of the Gospel Department of Audience Research and Planning Report" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Radio Voice of the Gospel, Department of Audience Research and Planning, December, 1974).

³⁵Ibid., p. 30.

director of the Department of Audience Research and Planning, at the Consultation in Jos, outlined the problem: "The churches in Africa have not yet fully realized, not only the power, but also the limitations of the media." An example he gave to support this is that churches often expect radio to be converting, not realizing that change of attitude is the rarest result of mass communication. An understanding of this limitation could lead to more effective follow-up ministry.³⁶ He went on to maintain that to many of the churches, the discipline of communication is a secondary matter. It is not really at the heart of what the church is all about, as it should be.³⁷ At the Audience Relations Workshop at RVOG, participants and instructors struggled together to find ways to overcome the above problem. Paul Volz, former RVOG Station Director, pointed to some important steps to be taken: open the channels for communication between church and studio. Identify the barriers. Both sides must listen. Then work out the nature of church involvement.³⁸

With this discussion we are already moving into the second portion of this chapter, namely: the Studio - Church Relationship level. The local area studio of Yemissrach Dimts, and its relationship to its sponsoring church, the Mekane Yesus Church in Ethiopia, will serve to represent one way that an area studio operates in relationship to its

³⁶Menkir Esayas, "The Church in Communication: Review in Priorities" (Paper presented at the Consultation on the Church's Involvement in Communications, Jos, Nigeria, June 28-July 3, 1974), p. 7.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 1-7.

³⁸Paul Volz, "The Church - The Studio - The Message" (Paper given at the Audience Relations Workshop, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, October, 1974)

church. A great deal of detail in this discussion will not be possible, but an attempt will be made to give a general outline, a fair picture of the organization, and some of the significant issues.

STUDIO - CHURCH RELATIONSHIP

1. Organization.

Yemissrach Dimts, as it presently exists, is a mass-media center of which the radio studio is one part. It is sponsored in totality by the Mekane Yesus Church and operates as a unit. To obtain a clearer picture, a brief historical resume will be useful.

Yemissrach Dimts (Y.D.) first grew out of a literature committee that was established out of the cooperation of five missions (1958). These were basically the Lutheran Missions in Ethiopia (American Lutheran Mission, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Swedish Evangelical Mission, German Hermansburg Mission and the Swedish Mission Bible True Friends). They wanted to co-ordinate their literature production. Yemissrach Dimts (Y.D.) was founded to do just that. Production on a joint basis was developed. Soon thereafter the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus was formed as a federation of churches in the various synods and administratively Y.D. fell under their umbrella. But the individual missions had set the pattern as far as representation. The Y.D. board consisted of members appointed by the various missions, including one from the Mekane Yesus Church. Y.D. was thus a joint effort of several groups, although administered by the ECMY. Gradually, the missions integrated into the synods and the synods themselves elected members to the board. The next step came when the ECMY became not only a federation of churches of the

various synods, but a united church. In 1974, it was decided that instead of the synods having direct representation, the executive committee of the ECMY should appoint members to the board nominated by the synods. The direct links to the synods were therefore transferred to the church at large. One mission, the Swedish Mission Bible True Friends, has remained somewhat autonomous and still appoints its own member to the board. But the other eight members come from the ECMY. This reorganization step was taken for administrative reasons and to give the ECMY the constitutional mandate to be fully involved in the affairs of the mass-media center. Although this was seen by the majority as the appropriate step, there was concern at the time that such a re-organization for administrative and efficiency reasons could run the danger of decreasing the significant touch with the pulse of the people that had occurred by the synod's direct representation. To overcome that danger, the ECMY must consistently be in close touch with the synods.³⁹

2. Theological Issues and Guidelines.

RVOG's first fundamental principle: "To proclaim to the widest possible audience the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures as the only means of salvation" is one which must hold true for all programming centers affiliated with RVOG. In the earlier chapter of RVOG theological assumptions, this statement was broken down to three theological assumptions: 1. The principle of "sola scriptura". 2. The Gospel is the only means of salvation for all people. 3. The Gospel is funda-

³⁹Dennis Everson, Personal Interview, Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 13, 1974.

mentally relevant for all people. Where does Yemissrach Dimts stand with regard to these beliefs?

With regard to the first, the Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, of which radio is one of the functions, declares in its constitution:

Members of the Programme believe and profess that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Holy Word of God and the only source and infallible norm of all church doctrine and practice.

Members of the Programme adhere to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed, which were formulated by the Fathers and accepted by the early Church, and see in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession which was worded by the Reformers, as well as in Luther's Catechism a pure exposition of the Word of God.⁴⁰

The authority of scripture is clearly stated in the first paragraph. The second paragraph goes on to reflect a very definite orientation to an understanding of the scriptures - even Luther's.

I asked Ato Tarakegn Adebo, General Secretary for the ECMY, to explain the aim of Y.D. "The aim of Y.D. is to proclaim the teachings of Christ, and to interpret it to the Ethiopian society ... The doctrinal statement of the Constitution makes this sound like a completely Lutheran undertaking, but this is not really what is done in practice."⁴¹

On the basis of his remarks we can already see at least a discrepancy between the Constitutional position and practice. Ato Yewond-Wassen, program director for the Y.D. radio studio, has this to say with regard to the doctrinal statement of the Constitution: "Regarding its Lutheran orientation, I should say that we rather simply preach the straight-forward message of the Gospel without engaging in denomina-

⁴⁰Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center. Constitution. 1974.

⁴¹Tarakegn Adebo, Personal Interview, Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 1974.

tionalism." When I asked if that might not endanger a clear identification of their "voice", he responded: "I would say that our 'voice' basically represents the Lutheran approach to the understanding of the Bible and the message of the Gospel, but we are careful to stress those issues which unify, rather than divide the Christian Church."⁴² That the proclamation of salvation found in the Scriptures is the fundamental purpose of Y.D. is indicated by the first section of Article III of the Constitution: "To provide and constantly develop means by which the Church can communicate the saving knowledge of the Gospel."⁴³

With regard to the third belief, that the Gospel is the only means of salvation for all people, just the fact that the church and Y.D. exist says a great deal about this conviction as to the relevance of the Gospel. Ato Tarakegn says: "It is my conviction that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is relevant to any human being, in any situation."⁴⁴ At another point, he said: "A Church that confesses as her Lord the Christ who was 'born in the likeness of men.' will not remain indifferent or aloof in the higher circles but goes down to the grassroots and identifies itself with the down-trodden and the needy ones."⁴⁵

Yemissrach Dimts also holds to the conviction that the Gospel speaks to the "whole man". As was indicated earlier, in Chapter 2, the

⁴² Yewond-Wassen.

⁴³ Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, Constitution, 1974.

⁴⁴ Adebo, Personal Interview.

⁴⁵ Tarakegn Adebo, "The Function of the ECMY in Rural Ethiopia" (Paper presented at the Seminary on the Christian's Social Responsibility, Mekane Yesus Seminary, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 14-16, 1973).

ECMY has been a guiding force in the African churches to recognize that body and soul cannot be divided, and that the Gospel ministers to man as a totality. At a big Nairobi Church Consultation on "Serving the Whole Man", in which the interrelationship of proclamation and development was discussed, ECMY, in emphasizing the "whole man" concept, quoted two African theologians, Dr. Monas Buthelezi and Dr. Kiwovele. "As long as man, community and the nation continue to be divided into body and spirit by church supporters, theology in the church in Africa will remain foreign to Africa, no matter how far it is still accepted blindly by the Church in Africa."--Dr. Kiwovele. "There was no separate society of religious people in contrast to those who had opted out of faith. To opt out of faith was to opt out of life itself." -- Dr. Buthelezi.⁴⁶

Ato Tarakegn has said that the aim of Y.D. is to proclaim Christ. He goes on to say that in this context, this means an integrated service to the whole man.⁴⁷

Ato Yewond-Wassen, as studio program director, affirms that the ECMY's theology of service to the whole man has been a significant contribution and guideline for Y.D. operations.⁴⁸

All of the above theological guidelines seem to have their consequences in the formation of Y.D.'s purpose, Article III of the Constitution:

⁴⁶ Church Officers of the ECMY, "Serving the Whole Man: A Responsible Church Ministry and a Flexible International Aid Relationship" (Paper presented at the Consultation on Proclamation and Human Development, Lutheran World Federation, Nairobi, October 21-25, 1974).

⁴⁷ Adebo, Personal Interview.

⁴⁸ Yewond-Wassen.

To provide and constantly develop means by which the Church can can communicate the saving knowledge of the Gospel.

To nurture the spiritual life of Christians.

To develop ways by which the Church can participate in the process of social development.⁴⁹

And as can be seen, this three-fold purpose conforms rather closely to the first three of RVOG's "Five Point Policy and Purpose."

3. Studio-Church Relationship in operation.

Communication is the mandate of the Church, a church that is a living, active, dynamic body of believers. The theological stance of Y.D., as outlined, gives direction to the communication that goes out over the radio. But a nicely defined, doctrinal theological statement cannot be the sole impetus to the work of radio producers. It should be clear by now that RVOG believes that it is the very personal incarnate reality of the Gospel in the living body of believers from each local area that is to be communicated. The success of this aim depends entirely on the studio-church relations. And not only must this kind of a message be launched by the church. Because of its character, it must be followed up by the church. The studio is a tool in the hands of the church to make this happen, and the RVOG station headquarters, along with studio, is a service agency to assist in the implementation of that aim.

Yemissrach Dimts Board: What can we say is happening in that regard in Ethiopia? The Yemissrach Dimts Board is the key liaison between studio and church. As was pointed out, over the years the nature of the Board has changed somewhat due to organizational changes in the represented

⁴⁹Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, Constitution, 1974.

churches. Now, with the exception of one member (representing the Swedish Mission Bible True Friends) all members are appointed through the ECMY (Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus). With regard to this change, the 1974 Yemissrach Dimits general manager points to pros and cons. On the positive side he feels that with the ECMY's greater responsibility it may be possible to be more in touch with the whole church, assess needs and translate these more quickly into program guidelines. On the negative side, he feels that prior to the shift, because of direct representation by the synods, there was certainly a closer touch with the people and their needs. Now everything has to go through a central office and the danger of centralization is ever-present.⁵⁰ With efficiency, intimacy may be lost. To overcome this, the elected delegates must be in close touch with the synods. Ato Tarakegn, General Secretary of the ECMY, felt that the church, deeply engaged in its work throughout the country would be able to give strong, lively input through the Board.⁵¹

Ideally, the Board should be a liaison between studio and church for a two-way exchange. Judging from reaction of the radio staff, this two-way exchange is more theory than practice. Audience Relations Officer, Hailu Fantaye, complains that from his perspective, the communication is rather one-sided. The Board made up of representatives of the church informs the staff of what to do. As Audience Relations Officer, he feels that he has no direct access to the church and no possibility for exchange of ideas. Not only that, he suggests that the Board is

⁵⁰Everson, Personal Interview.

⁵¹Adebo, Personal Interview.

heavy on the administration side and weak on really communicating some more dynamic projects of the church that the radio studio could look into.⁵² I asked Ato Tarakegn whether or not the structural relationship between church and studio lent itself to the possibility of Y.D. people becoming aware of church projects and implementing them in programming. He said that structures in addition to the Board should be set up so that Y.D. people could relate directly to different departments in the church where activities are planned.⁵³ One of the Y.D. radio producers argued very strongly that the church's voice in the upper levels and in the bureaucracy was clearly non-representative of the struggling church on the lower level of catechists and pastors. Obviously, in many respects, the Y.D. staff felt that in 1975 the arrangement was very weak. Through the old board, possibilities for interchange and true communication between church were still then felt to have been better.

With regard to a final issue, that of the Board's understanding of media possibilities and limitations, program director Yewond-Wassen felt that concerning the proposal to use new languages (mentioned earlier) the Board was too insistent on taking on new languages and was looking at the issue from a theoretical point of view, not showing an understanding of media possibilities and limitations.⁵⁴

Because the present board arrangement in 1975 was still brand new, perhaps it will take some time until it truly becomes an effective

⁵²Hailu Fantaye, Personal Interview, Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November, 1974.

⁵³Adebo, Personal Interview.

⁵⁴Yewond-Wassen.

instrument. But Yemissrach Dimts has been in operation for more than a decade. Despite some of the more recent weak points in church-studio relations, over this period of time, particularly in the last few years, what can be said with regard to its relationship to sponsoring churches? In what way can it be said that the voice of the church, not simply as an official body, but a living body of believers with its concern for evangelism, with its professed concern for the "whole man" has been communicated through the radio and has been followed up? Let's first of all take a look at the first step - how the programming reflects the church's voice.

Programming. I have pointed to the board as the key liaison between studio and church. Partly as a result of their action (both under the old board and the new board) and partly outside of their action, Y.D. radio programming reflects the voice of the church. Not having their Board Meeting Minutes as part of my research material, I cannot determine exactly in what way contacts between church and studio have been made. But I will point to some examples I have found that demonstrate church influences in programming.

Program policy, as indicated in the "purpose" of the constitution (see pg. 86) is a clear reflection not only of RVOG's program policy guidelines but also of the church's theological position. Although their purpose delineates in two statements proclamation of the "saving knowledge of the Gospel" and "social development" (perhaps to reflect the "30-70 formula" of RVOG), they, in reality, finally stand by the position that proclamation and development cannot be separated -- that the Gospel speaks to the "whole man". "We must look to Christ's life and teachings

and recognize that he responded to man's different kinds of needs. We must see the total gospel which liberates man."⁵⁵ Reference has already been made to the Y.D. program director's statement that the ECMY's theology of the whole man has had significant impact in programming. But I did find that some Y.D. radio producers felt that if the ECMY had ultimate say, they would probably reverse the formula to be 70% evangelical, 30% educational/developmental.

One of the reasons Ato Tarakegn supports the new board arrangement is that the church, which is in contact with people throughout the country, can better speak for itself than Y.D. producers who, he feels, are rather remote from the life of the church. One way to overcome this has been to hire producers who have had contact with the church and local needs and who have been involved at the grass roots level. It was the position of the General Manager, Dennis Everson, that this must be done. He was very against "professionalism" without real contact with the people.⁵⁶

Another way that Y.D. programming reflected the voice of the church was by involving students from the nearby seminary in programming. These students also assisted in writing theological and Biblical material for the literature department of the Y.D. mass media center.⁵⁷ One year, in June, 1973, a workshop to introduce radio work to theological students was used to kick off a three-month program in which, when the

⁵⁵Adebo, Personal Interview.

⁵⁶Everson, Personal Interview.

⁵⁷Ibid.

students returned to their homes in various parts of the country, they gathered information on the way radio programs were received and fed this back to Y.D., where it could be used to help improve upcoming programming. The returns were very satisfactory, according to the Y.D. report.⁵⁸ The purpose of the project was primarily for follow-up work, but the results certainly contribute to programming as well.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the radio studio Audience Relations Officer is not only involved in follow-up work but in maintaining contact with the church so as to provide input to programming. Although most recently he complained about lack of opportunity for contact with the church, he referred to opportunities he had had earlier for personal contact at synod conventions, and opportunities at that time to discuss programs and plans for the next year.⁵⁹

Other ways that contact is established is through radio studio recording tours, and use of local church and other talent in programming.

Much more contact is desired and is talked about. For example, Ato Tarakegn suggested at least three possible areas:

1. The church is running a 15,000 farmer participation rural development project. Y.D. people could go there and not only report on what's happening but involve people in actual programming.
2. Hundreds of church youth are involved in a number of exciting projects. Radio could involve these people in programming.
3. Forums could be held in the countryside where issues are discussed and individuals given a chance to express opinions. Radio could hook into these and make the ideas and hopes of individuals known to a wider audience.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Hailu Fantaye, "Introducing Radio Work to Theological Students" Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Yemissrach Dims Department of Public and Audience Relations, 1973).

⁵⁹ Fantaye, Personal Interview.

⁶⁰ Adebo, Personal Interview.

Church involvement is a necessary final step in follow-up ministry. Because of the nature of the church's message, and because their ultimate goal is to bring the listener into communion with the church and Jesus Christ, and because of the nature of radio, follow-up ministry is essential. Let's look at some ways that the follow-up ministry of Y.D. in relation to its church is being carried on.

Follow-Up Ministry. An audience relations officer works full-time for the radio station at Yemissrach Dimts, both on his own and with the church. He spends a good deal of time recording and answering listeners' letters, in addition to administering questionnaires, doing small-scale research, doing a program called "Letter-Box" where he answers questions that have come in, and evaluating various programs. I have already mentioned some of the contact with the church he has.

Yemissrach Dimts is a mass media center, and as such, attempts have been made to integrate other media -- particularly literature and cassettes with the radio ministry. One particular effort was in conjunction with a program called "Bible By Radio". Listeners groups were organized throughout the country (the average to be about 10-15 in each group) and then a text was prepared by the Y.D. literature department to be used in conjunction with the radio program. The first course organized lasted one year and included a half-way exam and final exam. Those who passed the course were given a "diploma" of recognition. There were varying degrees of success from different parts of the country, but on the whole, the audience relations officer felt that it was a signifi-

cant effort in church-studio cooperation.⁶¹

The project entitled "Introducing Radio Work to Theological Students" was another example of follow-up ministry as an integrated studio-church effort. The workshop that was held gave students a better understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the radio as a tool in the church's ministry. The three-month short-term reporting that they all did when they returned for vacation to homes and churches throughout the country certainly served as important feedback, but I think the most important results came later after the students graduated and took churches of their own. Their introduction to radio could give them an on-going perspective from which to operate as they took advantage of the radio in follow-up ministry of their own, rather than fighting it as a competitor, which too often takes place.

These are a few examples of the follow-up ministry between Y.D. and the ECMY. The audience relations officer himself felt that so much more could be done, and suggested that it would be very important to try to help church and synod people understand that they can be of more help in co-ordinating their efforts with Y.D.'s.⁶² Of course, in informal, non-organized ways, listeners are led through radio programs to local churches, but so much could be done to assist and insure this process. As of 1974-1975, it appeared as though Y.D. audience relations work was not as well integrated with the church as it should be.

⁶¹Hailu Fantaye, "Bible By Radio" (Paper presented at the Yemissrach Dimts Radio Program Planning Consultation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 1-2, 1973).

⁶²Fantaye, Personal Interview.

Radio Station Assistance. What are some ways that RVOG station has been of service to Yemissrach Dimts Radio Studio and the church? The 1974 Report of the RVOG Department of Audience Research and Planning lists areas of service and planned projects.⁶³

Audience Relations: The audience relations workshop in October 1974 laid a great deal of stress on developing and improving church-studio relations. Hailu Fantaye, Y.D. Studio audience relations officer, was there.

Extension Services: Another radio course was planned by the RVOG Extension Services Office to be offered at the local church seminary in Addis Ababa.

A Y.D. radio studio producer participated in a three-month radio production training course held at RVOG in 1975.

The Extension Services Office in 1975 also conducted a careful study of Personnel at Yemissrach Dimts toward future training plans.

Program Resources: The Program Resources Office in 1975 was conducting a survey at Y.D. along with the other area studios to determine program resource needs, contributions, etc. towards developing a program resources exchange program.

An experimental project developing listening groups in the Addis Ababa area was undertaken by the Program Resources Office in cooperation with the Y.D. studio audience relations office.

Audience Research: The audience research department, in cooperation with

⁶³ Menkir Esayas, "Radio Voice of the Gospel Department of Audience Research and Planning Report: 1974" (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Radio Voice of the Gospel).

Y.D. and the church prepared an extension pilot project in social and human development to take place in Ethiopia. In 1974 as well, the department head submitted a paper on "Barriers to Communication" at the ECMY Christian Education Curriculum Planning meeting, August, 1974.

Members of the ECMY also attended the 1974 Jos, Nigeria Consultation on the Church's Involvement in Communications.

Conclusion. Yemissrach Dimts, and its relationship to the ECMY has by no means been covered in detail. But it is hoped that a survey of its organization, its convictions, its policy and its practical operation has given a glimpse into the church-studio level of RVOG's operation -- the level as indicated in RVOG's own fundamental purpose of service to the church -- is its reason for being.

Chapter 5

CRITIQUE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After having spent ten months of personal involvement with Radio Voice of the Gospel, I could not now have presented a completely unbiased study of its effectiveness. But I certainly have striven for objectivity. Now that I can make my own critique I must say without apology that, overall, I think RVOG is an outstanding example of Christian radio mission.

Christian radio broadcasting throughout the world has received a lot of criticism for being little more than an appendage to the church. I have been very impressed with RVOG's fundamental conviction that communication is the church's mandate, and its attempt by its structure, and by its principles and policy to implement that. The creation of local area studios, with local staff, the provision for constant training programs and particularly the emphasis on audience relations are all clear reflections of that concern. RVOG has demonstrated a serious effort to reflect the church in action. For a period of time in the late 60's, as we have seen, studio orientation was replaced by station orientation. But more recently this error was recognized and studio orientation seems now to be emphasized more and more. Looking at the nature of the implementation of this conviction I think that much has been done to really bring church and studio together. But I could not help but realize at the Yemissrach Dimts studio that the church/studio relationship still has a long way to go. Concrete examples of church/studio co-operation have been pointed to, but they are much too sparse. And now there clearly is frustration as to the effectiveness of the new board

as liaison between church and studio. Administrative efficiency appears to have been gained, at least temporarily, at the expense of dynamic interchange between church and studio.

Discussion at the Audience Relations Conference at RVOG, October, 1974 showed that many church people still do not really understand radio and often even fight it, and radio people often slip towards "professionalism", losing a personal engagement to and concern for the life of the church.

It is my personal conviction, resulting from this project, that in Christian broadcasting, radio know-how and personal commitment belong together. I guess I have also been influenced by the association I have had with Sigurd Aske, first station director, now director of "Norwegian Church Relief". He is very leary of any kind of "professionalism" that does not carry with it a personal concern for and relationship with the individual person. On this basis, any Christian broadcasting which becomes an appendage to, rather than an instrument of the church is doomed to ineffectiveness.

Related to this, of course, is what has been referred to as the Christian communicator's position "in the world, but not of it". I am firmly convinced that this perspective must be maintained. In this paper it has been a bit difficult to directly analyze whether or not RVOG practices this conviction. Clearly they hold to it. And their "30-70 principle" reflects it. But without analyzing specific program content, which was not an aim of this paper, it is hard to know if they practice it. But, for example, I have been impressed with the Mekane Yesus Church's stand in this regard, most particularly reflected in their

document "The Inter-Relation of Proclamation and Development".¹ I believe that the identity given through faith in Jesus Christ is a fundamental focal point for all other human activity. Development work that does not proclaim Jesus Christ is not Christian. Certainly to feed the body first may be the logical imperative in many situation. A child with an empty spoon is not asking for a spoonful of "religious" language. But to give food and never to proclaim Christ is inexcusable and cannot be called Christian in the true sense of the word. RVOG's "30-70 principle" must remain a guiding reminder in this regard.

Moving to another issue, that of media intergration, I find that from my analysis of the Yemissrach Dimts Mass Media Center, it appears to be rather weak on really integrating other media with radio. The "Bible By Radio" project is the only example of media integration (literature and radio in this case) that I mentioned. There may have been other attempts. But the literature, the audio-visual, and the literacy departments could do much more to assist and supplement radio in its communication. Follow-up literature for radio programs is an important potential for reaching casual radio listeners. Educational cassettes could be excellent resources for radio listener's groups so there would be something to go along with a program, giving the message more potential for taking root.

Finally, I feel that although recent emphasis on studio orientation in the RVOG operation is the predominant overall concern, and RVOG

¹ IDOC Documentation Participation Project. The ECML Statement on the Inter-Relation Between Proclamation of the Gospel and Human Development. Proclamation and Development: Ethiopia. Report #8, 1974.

has been redesigned to reflect that by the creation of the Department of Audience Research and Planning, there is an everpresent danger that this department could become a supervising and dictating department rather than a listening and serving department. Only a continual awareness of that possibility will help prevent it.

In conclusion, I should say that because of the ever-changing and sometimes rapidly changing nature of the countries RVOG serves, mostly "developing countries", RVOG must constantly seek not only to be a part of but also a guiding light in the history of these countries. If McLuhan is right in his understanding of the media as powerful shapers of society, RVOG, as one of those, has a challenging potential.

APPENDIX

RVOG AREA STUDIOS

| <u>Studio</u> | <u>Date Inaugurated</u> | <u>Date Closed</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>CARAVS Studio</u> 15 New Civil Lines Jabalpur M.P., India (WACC) | 1963, Feb. 15 | |
| <u>Ceylon Studio</u> <u>Jeevithalekaya Studio</u> 15 Melbourne Avenue Bambalapitiya Colombo 4, Ceylon (WACC) | 1961, Sept. | 1970, Feb. |
| <u>Christian Arts and</u> <u>Communication Service</u> 3 Eldams Road, Teynampet Madras 18, India (LH) | 1962, May 1 | |
| <u>Christian Radio Studio</u> Uyo, S.E. State Nigeria (LH) | 1958, April | |
| Jerusalem Studio Middle East Lutheran Ministry Box 2496 Beirut, Lebanon (LH) | Not yet | |
| <u>Lutheran Production Studio</u> Box 223 Roodepoort, Transvaal South Africa (LWF) | 1962, May 1 | 1968, Nov. 1 |
| <u>Yaounde Studio</u> Service Radiophonique de la Federation Protestante B.P. 187 Yaounde, Cameroun (WACC) | 1963, May 1 | |
| <u>Yemissrach Dimts Studio</u> Box 1153 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (LWF) | 1961, May | |

| <u>Studio</u> | <u>Date Inaugurated</u> | <u>Date Closed</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Ethiopian Orthodox Church</u> P.O. Box 3137 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (IND) | 1963, May 5 | |
| <u>LWFBS Hong Kong Office</u> 33 Granville Road Kowloon, Hong Kong (LWF) | 1968, July 1 | |
| <u>Mema Studio</u> P.O. Box 162 Lilongwe, Malawi (WACC) | 1963, Feb. 15 | 1967, Mar. 4 |
| <u>Muryar Bishara</u> Box 287 Jos, Nigeria (WACC) | 1964, Jan. 1 | |
| <u>NECC Radio Programme</u> <u>Centre for Iran</u> Box 2995 Teheran, Iran (WACC) | 1962, May 1 | |
| <u>Radio Feon 'Ny Filazantsara</u> B.P. 95 Antsirabe, Madagascar (LWF) | 1962, May 1 | |
| <u>Sauti ya Ingili</u> <u>Lutheran Radio Centre</u> Box 777 Moshi, Tanzania (LWF) | 1962, Jan. 1 | |
| <u>Sawtu Linjila</u> B.P. 2 Ngaoundre, Cameroun (LWF) | 1961, Nov. 1 | |
| <u>Suvartha Vani Studio</u> Box 379 Vijayawada-2 Andra Pradesh India (WACC) | 1964, Jan. 1 | |

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